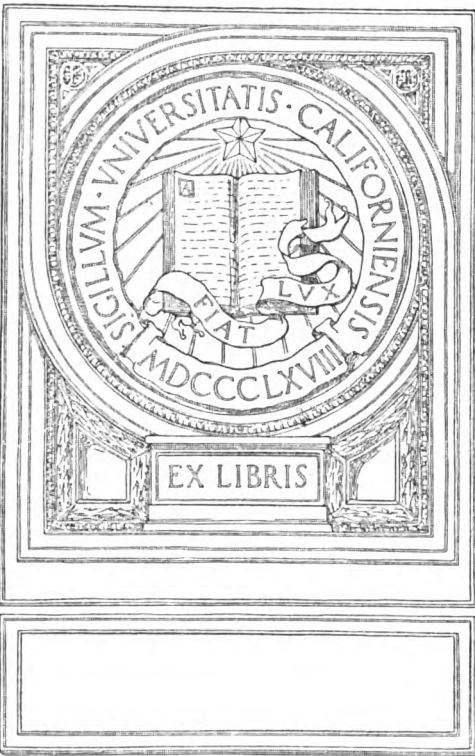


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# REMINISCENCES

OF

REV. CHARLES G. FINNEY.

## Speeches and Sketches

AT THE

GATHERING OF HIS FRIENDS AND PUPILS,

IN

OBERLIN, JULY 28th, 1876.

TOGETHER WITH

*PRESIDENT FAIRCHILD'S MEMORIAL SERMON,*

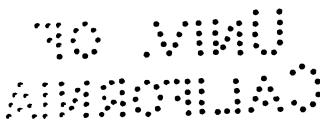
DELIVERED BEFORE

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1876.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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PRESIDENT FINNEY's death occurred August 16, 1875, two weeks subsequent to the College Commencement. At his burial the exercises were (as he would have wished them to be) brief and simple. A few extemporaneous remarks offered by the older members of the Theological Faculty were the only tribute then paid to his memory.

It was natural that his numerous friends (especially those who could not be present at his burial) should desire that other and special services should be held in commemoration of his long and useful life. To gratify this desire the Faculty of the College made arrangements for a "Memorial Meeting." The time chosen was Friday, July 28, 1876, the day preceding the Commencement in the Department of Theology. An invitation was extended to his "friends, converts, and pupils" throughout the land. A goodly number of them came; others sent letters of regret. The spacious audience-room of the First Church, in which Mr. Finney had so often preached to listening multitudes, was well filled during the entire three long sessions devoted to these commemorative exercises.

The intense interest felt in the wonderful character that was variously portrayed by the different speakers was rather deepened than exhausted; and the Memorial Baccalaureate Sermon delivered on the following Sunday, so far from being superfluous, seemed to all to be only a suitable complement to the exercises of the Memorial day.

The speeches and written papers which are here published, are arranged not entirely in the order of their delivery. For the convenience of the reader, the reminis-

cences of those who knew Mr. Finney as an Evangelist previous to his coming to Oberlin, are brought together in the First Section; while the Second embraces principally the recollections of his Oberlin associates and pupils. Dr. Pierson's study of Mr. Finney's character as a model Christian laborer; Rev. Mr. Wright's Analysis of his Theological System; and President Fairchild's more comprehensive delineation of him as "the Preacher, the Teacher, and the Man," are naturally brought together in the concluding Section.

Such a collection of sketches could not be expected to give a complete history of the life and work of Mr. Finney. It will not take the place of, nor diminish the demand for, a full and elaborate memoir. It is hoped, however, that, in connection with the Autobiography, it will enable the reader to form a measurably correct estimate of the character and labors of one who is destined to be held in remembrance hereafter as one of the greatest and best men of his time.

OBERLIN, *September, 1876.*

REMINISCENCES  
OF  
EARLY EVANGELISTIC LABORS.

---

MR. FINNEY IN ROCHESTER AND WESTERN NEW YORK.

[BY REV. CHARLES P. BUSH, D.D., OF NEW YORK CITY.]

MR. FINNEY'S first labors in Rochester extended over a period of six months, in the fall and winter of 1830-31.\* The place then contained about ten thousand inhabitants; and it was estimated that eight hundred souls were converted in the revival which attended his labors. An awakening of like proportions in the same place now, would embrace six or seven thousand converts, and in New York city eighty thousand. Mr. Finney visited Rochester again in 1842, and a thousand were converted; and again in 1856, and near another thousand submitted themselves to the Lord. Movements so remarkable are surely worthy of special mention on this occasion. We shall speak more particularly of the first.

There were then in Rochester three Presbyterian churches, one Baptist, two Methodist, and one Episcopal. Rev. Joseph Penney, an Irishman by birth and education, a ripe scholar,

---

\* The writer was at the time a student in the Rochester Academy; joined the Third church under Mr. Finney's ministry; heard almost every sermon which he preached in that first revival; often talked of them, in after years, with others whose memory may have been more perfect than his own, and so feels confident as to the truth of statements made and incidents narrated.

and a most conservative and cautious man, was pastor of the First Presbyterian church; Rev. William James, a highly educated American, but equally conservative and cautious in his way, was over the Second, now called the Brick church; while the Third had no pastor—Rev. Joel Parker, under whose ministry it had, in three years, grown from nothing to be a large and flourishing congregation, having left it but a few months before to take charge of what was then called the “First *Free Church*” of New York city.

Mr. Finney was invited to Rochester by the elders of the Third church, influenced especially by Josiah Bissell, one of their own number, and a man of marvelous energy and enterprise. But Mr. Finney was not at all inclined, at first, to accept the invitation. He called a council of his friends in Utica to help him consider the matter. They talked and prayed over it all one evening. The field was not regarded as inviting. There were difficulties and divisions in the churches. More promising invitations came from other directions, and his friends decided unanimously that it was his duty to go east and not west.

So, at a late hour, the conference ended and Mr. Finney retired to his room; but his own mind was not altogether satisfied. Quick as lightning, his thoughts went over the subject again, and every obstacle in the way of his going to Rochester seemed, on second thought, a good reason for visiting the place, and that at once. His plans were instantly changed, and next morning, before daylight, without stopping to communicate with one of his friends, he started west and not east.

What Rochester might have been but for that marvelous change of purpose, it is impossible now to tell; but we fear its history, even to the present time, would have been quite unlike that charming story which has been written. It seems as though the Lord must have had thoughts of special mercy for the place when He dropped those better counsels

into the good man's mind, and so sent him to his night's repose.

Mr. Finney's visit to Rochester excited the greatest interest at once. Crowds attended wherever he preached. The churches were not large enough to hold the multitudes that thronged to hear him. After the pews were all filled, the aisles and areas would be supplied with chairs and benches; persons would sit as close as possible all over the pulpit stairs; and still others, men and women, and children, would stand wherever standing-room could be found, throughout a long and exhausting service.

Most of the preaching was in the Third church, although other houses of worship were almost at once thrown open, and union meetings, especially on week day evenings, were held in others. It was manifestly of the Lord that Mr. Finney was able to secure the countenance and co-operation of those very conservative and cautious pastors; as it was also to their credit that they received him as the messenger of God.

/ An exciting incident, which came near being an awful calamity, occurred soon after the meetings began. A vast crowd were assembled one Friday evening, in the First church. Mr. Penney was leading in the opening prayer, when suddenly there was a crash in the singers' gallery. A portion of the ceiling had fallen upon the heads of the singers, and they were enveloped in a cloud of dust.

In an instant, all was confusion, the audience evidently fearing that the building itself was falling. No one waited for another. The rush to get out the doors was fearful; and some dashed through the windows, carrying sash and glass with them, cutting and maiming themselves as they went. One lady was trodden under foot in the doorway, and would have been crushed to death, if a giant of a man had not forced the crowd back for a moment and dragged her out of her perilous position. Of course, the uproar

brought Mr. Penney's prayer to a sudden conclusion, and he, too, was out of the house quicker than we can tell it; but Mr. Finney stood in the pulpit, stretched out his long arm over the surging throng, and cried at the top of his voice: "Keep still! keep still! there is no danger."

But there *was* danger, and the people would not keep still. The house was emptied in a few moments; and it was found on examination that the walls had settled and separated, so as to let fall upon the plastering above the singers' seats, a loose bit of scantling left by some careless workman among the timbers of the roof; and it was thought that if the pressure had remained but a few moments longer upon the galleries, the whole structure would have been down upon our heads. It would seem as though a large part of the audience must have been killed instantly, and others mangled and maimed for life, if they had not taken the alarm as they did. It may be that He who guides the sparrow's fall allowed that bit of timber to be left as it was, on purpose to give us warning.

That church edifice was condemned, and was not used any more during the revival; but it was mercifully ordered that by this the work should not be checked, although the evening audiences were very sensitive for a time. Quite a panic was occasioned soon after, in the Third church, merely by the slamming of a pew-door. The audience were on their feet, and utter confusion reigned for a few moments. Some rushed into the street. One man dashed through a window, fell upon the stone steps of the basement of the house, and was nearly killed. But still the work went on.

Mr. Finney generally preached three times on the Sabbath and two or three evenings of each week, besides frequently visiting some neighboring town to give a sermon in the afternoon. Added to all this, he held frequent inquiry-meetings and private interviews with the anxious, often at work until near midnight and up and at it again in the early morning.

The amount of hard work, for brain and muscle, performed by that man in those six months was something prodigious.

At first his preaching was addressed almost exclusively to professors of religion, with hardly a word for some time to the impenitent; but the duties and responsibilities of a Christian life were so portrayed as absolutely to amaze and frighten the cold and backslidden professor. The sins of worldliness, lukewarmness, and neglect of duty were set in startling colors. There was indeed something fearful in those sermons, so searching, scorching, withering; and yet no one could find fault with them, for they were drawn directly from the Word of God. He had a "Thus saith the Lord" for every statement; and the Holy Spirit was evidently attending every word spoken and carrying conviction to every mind. Indeed, the very atmosphere of the place seemed surcharged with the solemnity of eternity; and there was in the speaker the dignity and majesty of one of the old prophets. His words were like flames of fire. False hopes were consumed like tow by their touch. Backsliders were brought trembling and astonished to the feet of the Saviour to ask for mercy. Reconciliations were effected among estranged brethren. Confessions, sad and pitiable, fell from penitent lips. Forgiveness was sought and found at the mercy-seat. All were melted together in love and new consecration to the Master.

This was preliminary work, attended with groans and tears. Strong men, prominent members and officers of the churches, made public confession of their sins, their inconsistencies, and especially of their great guilt in caring so little for the prosperity of Zion, and doing so little for the salvation of sinners around them. The sermon from the text, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and that from the words, "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire," made a prodigious impression; and the confession, full of anguish,

wrung from many an agonized heart was, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother."

The church being thus shaken as by an earthquake, and Christians aroused to pray fervently for God's blessing, Mr. Finney was prepared to preach to sinners. He began with the law, showing what its requirements are, what its penalty, and how just they are, how absolutely necessary to the order and stability of the universe; how even the law itself, as really as the Gospel, demonstrates the goodness of the divine Being; and therefore how fearful a thing it must be to sin against such a law-giver and against all the interests of the universe.

There was something fearful in those sermons also. Indeed, it almost makes one shudder, even after this lapse of years, to recall some of them—that especially from the text, "The wages of sin is death." The preacher's imagination was as vivid as his logic was inexorable. After laying down self-evident principles of human nature and divine government, then drawing out Scripture truth touching the same, making all plain and irresistible by argument and illustration, how he rung the changes on that word "wages," as he described the condition of the lost soul: "You will get your '*wages*'; just what you have earned, your due; nothing more, nothing less; and as the smoke ~~of~~ your torment, like a thick cloud, ascends forever and ever, you will see written upon its curling folds, in great staring letters of light, this awful word, wages, *wages*, WAGES!"

As the preacher uttered this sentence, he stood at his full height, tall and majestic—stood as if transfixed, gazing and pointing toward the emblazoned cloud, as it seemed to roll up before him; his clear, shrill voice rising to its highest pitch, and penetrating every nook and corner of the vast assembly. People held their breath. Every heart stood still. It was almost enough to raise the dead—there were no sleepers within the sound of that clarion voice.



And yet that same mighty man, when speaking of the love of Christ or the peril of the soul in its sins, was as great in tenderness and pity as before in majesty and truth; moved himself to tears and entreaties enough to break a heart of stone. Many seem to think of him only as the stern, uncompromising preacher of righteousness. He was that, and more also—a Paul in doctrine, but touching and tender as John himself in his delineations of divine love. But he did not preach love as a mere instinct, or a weak, mawkish, and indiscriminating sentiment. His God was not *all* pity; but also a God of majesty and of law and of justice—His love all the more glorious because intelligent, and because it saves from wrath deserved. /

We once saw a young man lying at full length upon the floor of Mr. Finney's room, his face almost black with rage, as he cursed God and cursed the day of his birth, as though possessed of the evil one; Mr. Finney meantime walking the floor, wringing his hands and groaning aloud as he fervently prayed that that enraged bull of Bashan might not break through all restraint; blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and so be cast off forever.

This youth, who was proud and skeptical, but apparently under deep conviction of sin, had come in to converse with the minister. Of course, the conversation was plain and searching. The young man found all the bulwarks of his infidelity falling flat around him; they could not stand for a moment against the battering rams of a true logic. The poor stripling was confounded and vexed, but not subdued; and yet he had consented to kneel to be prayed for, and the minister had used some pretty plain language in this service also, telling the Lord how proud and foolish and rebellious this pretended inquirer was. When the prayer was ended, the young man was so beside himself with enmity and rage that, instead of rising from his knees, he rolled over on the floor, cursing and swearing like Peter—only more so.

But the good man's prayer prevailed; the youth did not blaspheme the Holy Ghost; he grew more calm; accepted the truth, and has been a consistent and honored member of the Church from that day to this.

It will be remembered that the year 1831 was a season of marvelous religious influences throughout the land; but in few places, if in any, was the work so remarkable as in and around Rochester. We have already given the number of converts as eight hundred; but that figure is far too small if we include the surrounding towns, in many of which Mr. Finney preached more or less, whilst all drew much of their inspiration from what was going on there. One hundred and fifty that year were received into the First Presbyterian church of the city—ninety-two at one time. One hundred and eleven were added to the Second church; and one hundred and forty to the Third. The Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopal Churches also gathered large harvests. The Presbyterian church in the neighboring town of Penfield received thirty-nine new members; Pittsford about the same number; Bergen one hundred; Clarkson the same; Ogden one hundred and thirty; and other towns in like proportion. Over twelve hundred new members were added that year to the churches of Rochester Presbytery alone, beside the great ingathering on the same field into churches of other denominations.

But the grandeur of that work is not to be estimated by numbers alone. The whole community was stirred. Religion was the one topic of conversation, in the house, in the shop, in the office, and on the street. The soul's interests were uppermost in all minds. God was near; eternity real; the judgment sure. Noise and confusion and lawlessness gave place to quiet and order and comfort. The only theatre in the city was converted into a livery stable; the only circus into a soap and candle factory. Grog shops were closed; the Sabbath was honored; the sanctuaries were

thronged with happy worshipers; a new impulse was given to every philanthropic enterprise; the fountains of benevolence were opened, and men lived to do good.

And it is worthy of special notice that a large number of the leading men of the place were among the converts—the lawyers, the judges, physicians, merchants, bankers, and master mechanics. These classes were more moved from the very first than any other. Tall oaks were bowed as by the blast of the hurricane. Skeptics and scoffers were brought in, and a large number of the most promising of the young men. It is said that no less than forty of them entered the ministry. We have known some of them who have not lived in vain; and some have finished their work and gone to their reward; whilst others are still bearing the heat and burden of the day.

It is not too much to say that the whole character of the city was changed by that revival. Most of the leaders of society being converted, and exerting a controlling influence in social life, in business, and in civil affairs, religion was enthroned as it has been in few other places. The city has been famous ever since for its high moral tone, its strong churches, its evangelical and earnest ministry, its frequent and powerful revivals of religion. It always has "the smell of a field which the Lord hath blest;" and those who know the place best ascribe much of all the good which has characterized it to the shaping and controlling influence of that first grand revival. Even the courts and the prisons bore witness to its blessed effects. There was a wonderful falling off in crime. The courts had little to do, and the jail was nearly empty for years afterward.

Of course, the young people of the place had before been sufficiently vain and foolish. Indeed, there were young men there who prided themselves on knowing how to do the gay and festive a little better than anybody else. They had been accustomed to open the winter's festivities with a grand ball;

but this revival was likely to make their dancing an uphill business. They took the alarm and began to consider what to do to resist the rising tide. Not to be thwarted in their pleasures, they rushed around, got out their invitations post-haste, and anticipated the time of holding the ball by a month; but it was a stale and melancholy affair; and in less than another month the managers were all converted, and renounced their dancing forever. Some of them are leading members of Christian churches to-day and know whereof we affirm.

It will be inferred that Mr. Finney could read character. It would seem, indeed, as though no man ever knew the human heart better, or could more successfully explore its secret recesses of wrong and deceit. Able and acute men were often astonished to see how much better he knew them than they knew themselves. A single question, or even a look from his great searching eyes, would turn their very hearts inside out, and reveal to themselves depths of wickedness of which they had not dreamed before.

A conceited young infidel, attracted chiefly by curiosity, came into the inquiry-room. Mr. Finney approached him with some solemn questions touching his soul's interest. Instantly the young man bristled up for an argument against the truths of Christianity. The great preacher saw at a glance that the tyro merely wished to display himself. He had no time to witness such a silly pageant, as a hundred anxious inquirers were waiting for him; he therefore gave the fledgling just one look of mingled scorn and pity, and passed on.

No medicine ever touched the diseased spot more speedily than that look reached that man's guilty conscience. He saw in a moment that the man of God had read him through and through; that his immense conceit, and his palpable insincerity, had not so much as a gauze veil over them, and he

was confounded. Instantly, his own sinfulness was revealed to him as never before. From that moment, he was struck under genuine conviction; was soon converted, and thanked Mr. Finney for that reproofing glance. He spoke of the consummate wisdom of that *silent* rebuke, and freely acknowledged that nothing else could have touched him, or so soon have brought him to his senses.

Another youth came to him with the catechism. He had there learned that the "elect" alone are to be saved; he did not know as he was one of the elect; and he did not see any use trying to get religion until he knew that. Mr. Finney told him to put away his catechism and go to his Bible, and he would there find it written long before the catechism was made, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"—"that is catechism enough for you; at least for the present." The young man took the advice and had no further trouble. He has long been an able and successful pastor in the Presbyterian Church. He preaches both Scripture and catechism, and God has been pleased to use him as the instrument of many conversions.

It was in Rochester that Mr. Finney first used what was called the "anxious seat." He had already labored for six years as an Evangelist, and great numbers had been converted under his preaching. He had sometimes called upon those who were anxious, to stand up for a few moments in the congregation, as an expression of their desire for special prayer in their behalf. But he had begun to feel that that was not enough. He wanted something more demonstrative; something which should more fully commit the soul to the Lord, and help to break down its pride and the fear of man. We believe it is the general experience, that we all first want religion without letting anybody know it; ashamed to confess to our fellow-men that which they already know; ashamed publicly to ask forgiveness for sins and crimes publicly committed; and so thousands carry their

load in secret, as they flatter themselves, and die with their sins upon them.

To help the sinner to break these shackles of pride and fear, Mr. Finney conceived the idea of calling the anxious forward to special seats vacated for them in front of the pulpit, there to kneel before the whole assembly whilst prayer should be offered particularly for them. This was a hard thing for some of the proud men of that city to do; and yet the result showed that there was profound philosophy and consummate wisdom in it. It would seem as though nothing less would have sufficed for some of them, to crucify their enormous pride and enable them to receive the grace of life. It certainly produced a profound sensation, to see some of the first lawyers and judges of the place, some of the foremost merchants and "chief women" thus humbling themselves before their fellow-citizens and asking for mercy, like the very Magdalens and the chiefest of sinners. It plainly helped to swell the excitement and roll on the work.

Mr. Finney's method of conducting an inquiry-meeting is worthy of special mention. He allowed no confusion, no loud talking, no moving about, except as he passed quietly from one to another, asking a few questions in a subdued tone of voice, and addressing to each a few words of instruction and admonition. He did not commit this most difficult and delicate business to all alike; although he did sometimes call to his aid a few well-chosen friends, of ripe Christian experience. But it would have distressed him beyond measure to see inexperienced and ignorant men, women, and children rushing indiscriminately to this service, saying, perhaps, the very worst things possible to an inquiring soul, dissipating conviction and encouraging false hopes. If ever wisdom is needed on earth, it is in the inquiry-room.

When Mr. Finney met a case of peculiar interest, he might, indeed, stop and call attention to it before going further; might make it the occasion of exact and definite

instruction, and then commend the individual to God in special prayer. But the solemnity of eternity always brooded over those meetings. Common talk was excluded. All felt that God was there; and that immortal souls were in peril and in anguish; and Mr. Finney moved about as the thoughtful physician moves in the room of the sick and the dying.

Nobody knows better than those who loved and admired this good man most, that he had his peculiarities—what great man has not? But we believe he was never accused of levity or insincerity. He was a plain, blunt man, that spake right on, and always meant just what he said. His soul abhorred deceit and hypocrisy. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that he saw the truth in greater clearness, and more fully appreciated its value and importance, than most men could. He was, in fact, a giant in intellect, in the grandeur of his thoughts and purposes, and in the sublime force of his character, and this was enough to justify some of his peculiarities.

It is said, that he told one of the elders of the church at Adams, before he was converted, that Christians generally did not half believe what they professed. "If ever I become a Christian," he said, "I shall go into it with all my might"—and he did. That is, he went to work as though he really *believed* that God had a right to *all* his powers; and as though men around him were really sinners, going down to death eternal; and as though something ought to be done for their salvation. Hence, like Paul, he began at once to "warn every one night and day with tears;" and with the Bible in his hand he could not see why this was not the proper thing to do. And he could never bear lukewarmness, and laziness, and half-way measures while infinite interests were at stake. He was simply in earnest, as Paul was, when he could even wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen, according to the flesh; or as Christ was, when He made his soul an offering for sin.

Suppose we grant that he did not always weigh his words as more cautious mortals might have done. How could he, and still be that son of thunder, that whip of scorpions which the times demanded? No milder character could have stirred all Central and Western New York as he did. He was manifestly raised up for the occasion, and clothed with power according to its need; "peculiarities" and "eccentricities" included, if any so insist. And it is not too much to say, that he introduced a new era in preaching, the era of simplicity, directness, and earnestness; looking for definite and immediate results. He discarded technical terms, and talked to the people, so that they knew that he meant them, and was talking about their interests; and that they were guilty and in danger, and had something to do to escape the wrath to come. And yet Mr. Finney's peculiarities have been greatly exaggerated. He did not say or do one-tenth part of the queer things ascribed to him. His weak imitators sometimes harmed him. They did queer things, and he had the credit of them.

Besides, it was simply impossible even for some ministers at that time to judge Mr. Finney justly; they were so far behind him in zeal, in consecration; his life was, in fact, such a scathing rebuke to their indolence and indifference, not to say worldliness and want of adaptation to the work of the ministry. He did *not say*, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord of hosts;" but men did see it, and it provoked envy and detraction, from which he often suffered and by which his work was sometimes hindered.

Besides, again, Mr. Finney tried to adapt his instructions to the times, and that crossed the prejudices of many staid and excellent men. He came, like John the Baptist, preaching repentance. The churches in all that region had had a surfeit of "inability," and "election," and "wine sovereignty." Most of the religious teaching had somehow given the impression, whether intended or not, that we



have little or nothing to do with our own salvation, except to "wait God's time"—if He sees fit to come and convert us He will; if not, we can't help it; we must perish.

It had also come to pass that sin was generally regarded as more a misfortune than a fault; it was inherited; it came with our blood, and we could not help it. But one of Mr. Finney's earliest sermons was from the words, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" from which he taught us that sinners are the guilty authors of their own destruction; not the innocent victims of a terrible calamity. And here he explained the nature of sin, as a transgression of the law; rebellion against divine authority; the foolish, wicked choice of our own way in preference to God's way.

And then, as to our inability, he said, "Behold, I set before you life and death; therefore choose life." You *can* choose life, or God would not have commanded it; you must choose life, or perish forever. Or he would say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." You *can* believe, or the command is unjust; you must believe, or be lost. And then he would tell us what true faith was, and what it was not; illustrating it in various ways, and turning it over and over, until even the blind could see that faith is a voluntary act; our *own* act; and that no one else, not even God Himself, could believe for us; and so also that unbelief is a voluntary act and a sin.

But no one of his sermons was at first so new and startling as that from the words, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die?"—Sinners bound to make themselves new hearts! Many had supposed that they could as soon create a new world as do that. But Mr. Finney made the duty plain, and thousands found it entirely practicable.

And then as to waiting God's time, he said, You have waited too long already. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." You need not wait for God; He

is waiting for you; and "God now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." That is your first and absolute duty; and if so, of course you have all the powers necessary for the performance of that duty, and every moment you delay it you are rebelling against God, and doing despite to the spirit of His grace.

This preaching was like a new revelation to many. It startled them from the sleep of long and miserable years of indolent waiting and guilty inaction. It was also a gleam of hope to many who had been on the borders of despair, supposing that there was nothing for them to do, and seeing no hope that God would interpose in their behalf.

And yet Mr. Finney did not overlook or slight this other essential truth, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." He constantly and emphatically taught that "the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us." He claimed nothing for himself. He was but the instrument in the Divine hand. All the arguments and entreaties possible from human lips, could not convert a single soul without the Spirit's agency. No minister ever taught this doctrine more distinctly or more emphatically. And yet he did not so hold it as to destroy man's accountability, or to excuse or palliate his sins. He did not teach that the Spirit's influences were needed to create new faculties in us, but only to lead us to use aright the powers we already have; just exactly as the great President Edwards taught long before, although he was not always consistent with himself.

Mr. Finney was a "New School" man, a moderate Calvinist, orthodox to the core on the cardinal doctrines of that system, the divinity of Christ, the atonement, man's utter sinfulness, his need of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and his salvation by grace alone. And his converts have run well; although some did, indeed, fall off—some did in Edwards' day, some in Nettleton's; but most of those converted in the great revival of which we speak have stood

the test of time, and some of them have been eminent in usefulness. Indeed, they have constituted a large portion of the intelligence, the wisdom, and efficiency of the churches of Central and Western New York from that day to this, whilst many are scattered in other parts of the country, and some even in other lands, working for the Master.

When Mr. Finney visited Rochester the second time, which was in 1842, he was on his way from Providence, R. I., where he had been laboring for some time, to his home in Oberlin. He was thoroughly worn down with work, and greatly needed a season of rest. He stopped, as he supposed, for a day only, to gather a little strength before going further. As soon, however, as it was known that he was there, he was beset with invitations to stay and preach. And what was very remarkable, the first one who approached him on the subject was an unconverted lawyer, a judge of the highest court of the State. This was soon followed by a written request from leading members of the bar, that a course of lectures might be given to lawyers, particularly adapted to their modes of thought and their need. Mr. Finney gladly consented to this, and many of them were converted, the eminent judge referred to being the first to come out on the Lord's side. His conversion was very striking in its circumstances, and made a profound impression on the whole community. Other leading citizens and "chief women not a few," were brought in.

At his third and last effort in Rochester, which was in 1855-'56, the lawyers again asked for a course of lectures to their profession, the request being signed by two judges of the Court of Appeals. To this Mr. Finney consented, as before, and many of the first citizens of the place who had passed through the former revivals, now embraced the great salvation.

In his Autobiography, that wonderful book, which is preaching far and wide almost as the great Evangelist did while

living, Mr. Finney makes this record : "What was quite remarkable in the three revivals that I have witnessed in Rochester, they all commenced and made their first progress among the higher classes of society. This," he adds, "was very favorable to the general spread of the work and the overcoming of opposition." And again he says, "I never preached anywhere with more pleasure than in Rochester. They are a highly intelligent people, and have ever manifested a candor, an earnestness, and an appreciation of the truth, excelling anything I have seen, on so large a scale, in any other place."

Mr. Finney thought well of Rochester, and he loved to talk of those revivals to the very last. Indeed, hardly anything, in his old age, would rouse him more. He would inquire affectionately after one and another of his dear children in the Lord ; where they were, what they were doing, what especially was their spiritual condition, whether or not they were true to their early professions, and still laboring with their might in the Lord's vineyard. And then he would go over some of those early scenes, relating incidents with the greatest minuteness and accuracy—how one and another fought against his convictions, but was finally subdued by Divine grace.

The people of Rochester and of all Western New York, ought to think well of Mr. Finney. Indeed, they owe him a debt of gratitude which they can never repay. As godliness hath promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come, thousands and tens of thousands are really indebted, under God, to his blessed influence and instruction for what they are and what they possess for this world, as well as for the hope of the life everlasting.

He met them in their peril ; warned them of their danger ; pointed them to paths of peace and safety. Thousands gave up their unlawful pursuits and crooked ways, escaped from the snares in which their feet were already entangled,

and became sober, industrious, and virtuous citizens. It is not too much to say, that thousands are indebted to that wonderful man for their success in life; for position, competence, influence, home, kindred, friends, and daily joys. What miserable shipwreck many of them might have made, both for this world and the next, if he had not so met them and moved them by his mighty influence, it is not difficult to conjecture. Is it too much to expect that some of those thus favored will show their gratitude by their works?

Although this memorial day is not intended as an occasion for raising money, yet it may not be amiss just to say in closing, that a project has been started by some of Mr. Finney's early friends outside of Oberlin, to found a professorship in this institution, to bear his honored name, to perpetuate his memory and his influence. It has seemed to them the fittest monument that could be erected to the man. And even in these troublous times some generous subscriptions have already been made to the object. Others are hoped for and confidently expected. Indeed, the project is manifestly too good an one to fail. It needs only to be stated to commend itself to every one's sympathy and approval.

But it can not, and should not, long be delayed. The institution needs it, and needs it *now*. Besides, Mr. Finney's early friends are passing away. What they do should be done quickly. Fervently do we hope that this memorial service may in some way favor and hasten the consummation of a project so just and so important.

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REMARKS OF REV. R. L. STANTON, D.D., OF CINCINNATI.

Dr. Bush and myself were boys together in Rochester; and while he has spoken of the whole of Mr. Finney's work there at different periods, what I have to say must be confined to his first visit, which occurred in the latter part of the

year 1830. We had heard of his labors in the farther east ; and a great many stories preceded him concerning his methods of work, which created some prejudice against him, so that some apprehension was felt about inviting him.

He began his labors in the Third Presbyterian church, the pulpit of which was then vacant, and which was situated on the east side of the Genesee river.

My mother was a member of the First Presbyterian church, of which Dr. Penney was then pastor ; and which, together with the Second Presbyterian church, was situated on the west side of the river.

The First and Second churches both stood aloof at first, and it was felt that one would lose caste by going to hear him. But my mother was very anxious to hear him ; and she concluded to go, as Nicodemus did, by night, and she disguised herself and took a back seat. She went the second time with less fear, and was favorably impressed, and the third time took me with her ; and from that time, I think, I attended all the public services which he held during the six or seven months of his sojourn, and there were several every day. I was then a boy, and rather inclined to infidel sentiments ; but on the first Sabbath of January 1831, I stood up in the Second church, of which Dr. Wisner was pastor, and made a public profession of religion.

I was present in the First church when the catastrophe occurred which Dr. Bush has described. It was regarded by many as a sort of judgment on that church, that they might be driven out to meet with other congregations. I never saw Mr. Finney after the labors of that winter and spring were over. I never had any particular personal intercourse with him.

Indeed, when I heard him preach that winter, I stood in fear of him. I have heard many of the great preachers of the day, and I regard him as the greatest preacher that I have ever heard.

I should say that Mr. Finney was a *severe* preacher. He held up the law as I never heard it held up before or since. He gave such delineations of sin as would make men literally tremble in their seats. The preaching of the present day would, I think, be more effective had it more of this element. On the other hand, I have never heard such exhibitions of the love of Christ.

I recollect hearing him preach a sermon on the text, "The wages of sin is death." I timed him, and he preached two hours. I never heard such delineations of the terrible wrath of God. I heard that he preached from the same text in neighboring towns three solid hours.

I think Mr. Finney introduced a new style of preaching. The first three-fourths of his sermon was in a colloquial style; and in the latter part he would make such appeals as I never listened to anywhere. He was a thorough believer in the depravity of the human heart. I remember of hearing him preach from the text, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The heads of his discourse were as follows: 1. Men in their natural state do not love God. 2. All men in their natural state hate God. 3. All men in their natural state hate God with a perfect hatred. 4. Their hatred of God is such that, if they could, they would drive Him from his throne. . . .

There was an auctioneer in Rochester who was a shrewd man, and who was as glib in uttering the common platitudes of infidelity as he was as an auctioneer. He was at the head of an infidel club. After Mr. Finney came to Rochester that man was converted, and the whole club was converted. . . .

My mother and three other ladies had a strong desire that certain prominent men should be brought under the power of the Gospel; and they agreed to meet regularly every day and pray for a leading lawyer, who was an infidel, but a gentleman. They continued to pray for him several weeks,

though nothing was said to him or to any one outside of their circle. But when he went to his office one morning he was in a strange state of mind. He could give no attention to his books and papers, and so he continued for several days. At last he began to think that possibly he was a subject of the influences of God's Spirit; and he was at length brought to bow at the feet of Jesus, and ever after that used the influence of his high position for true religion. I have often thought of this case, and have wished that the statement of it might be made to Professor John Tyndal, and that he might be asked to explain it. Many like instances occurred that winter.

I, as well as my brother Pierson, have belonged to the Old School Presbyterian Church. After my education was completed I went far South, and geographically was thrown into the Old School Church. You know how you have been regarded by the Old School. But I have ever felt the warmest affection for the work you are all doing here. When I came here this time, I was struck with the wonderful progress that you had made. While living in the South, I was never ashamed to acknowledge that I was a Yankee, and that I approved of the principles which you advocate here. You have here a vast fountain and mine of wealth established forty years ago; but I think the time has come when the wealth of which you have little, should pour into this fountain of learning. I do not know a better time for founding a Finney professorship; and I hope our good brethren who have wealth will remember you with liberal donations. I say, in conclusion, God bless Oberlin! and God bless you all!

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REMARKS OF REV. DR. PIERSON, OF DETROIT.

I want to contribute now a word of personal reminiscence, and that a unique one. I have been referred to as an Old School Presbyterian; but, I think, you will find that I was



not born that way. My father was the cashier and intimate friend of Arthur Tappan. Before my birth, for months my father and mother were in constant attendance on the services of Mr. Finney in the Chatham Street chapel, New York. They occupied the very house beneath which, by an archway, the throngs poured into the chapel. The impression then made upon my mother's mind, determined her to consecrate me to the work of the ministry; and from my birth I never knew any hour when I was converted, and when I did not expect to be a minister.

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REMARKS OF REV. JOHN P. AVERY, OF CLEVELAND, OHIO.

Forty-nine years ago, in my native town of New Lebanon, N. Y., I made Mr. Finney's acquaintance. He came to our rural town from the city of Troy. He was introduced to our place through the conversion of a prominent young lady, who went to Troy to purchase a new ball-dress, and instead of the new dress, brought back a new heart. It was a case of such mark that it interested the whole community. But there was some prejudice against him; and having been invited by the pastor of the church, an opposition was raised by the worldly part of the community, which took the form of getting up a new-year's ball. I was then a youth of sixteen, and inclined to places of hilarity. I started for the ball-room, but was strangely drawn to the prayer-meeting. Nearly all who attended the ball were afterwards converted.

I listened to Mr. Finney's first sermon. The town had churches, composed principally of godly women, while most of their husbands were trusting in their morality.

His text was: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

I remember distinctly the plan of the sermon. First, he

showed how punctilious and high were the works of the Pharisees; then he contrasted these with the good works of moral men at the present day; and then he enforced it upon his hearers that unless they exceeded these they could not be saved. It seemed to excite hostility all over the community. The next day it was reported that Mr. Finney had come there to preach down morality. But there were some leading men who laid it to heart, and were converted. One had been a Unitarian, and had great influence; and when he came out, it produced a great effect.

Another was a physician, a man in many things like Mr. Finney. He began early to oppose Mr. Finney, and tried to get every one to hear another preacher. Finally, his opposition seemed to have come to a crisis, and he took his seat one Sabbath in the choir. I saw Mr. Finney take the Bible and change his text. He preached from the words, "For God so loved the world," etc. It was an overwhelming, melting discourse; and I think the doctor, with many others, were brought to a stand.

In the afternoon he presented himself again, and the text was, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" In the evening, he came the third time, and the text was, "And they made light of it."

The lady who had been converted in Troy, turned to him and putting her hand on him, said: "Doctor, will you go away and make light of this to-night?"

"No," said he, "I will not."

And he did not. He rose and said: "My friends, my infidel associates, my boon companions, look at me and see this iron frame tremble like an aspen leaf. It is God. I am a sinner."

The father of this young lady, who had been praying for him, and the whole congregation, dropped upon their knees and gave thanks to God. We learned subsequently that the doctor was so affected that he sprang from his bed at mid-

night, saying to his wife, "I can not live so, and I will not if there is any way to get out of it." He went over to his Unitarian neighbor, who had been converted, and got advice of him. After his conversion, opposition, like a dam, broke away, and all rushed in, and the whole place seemed to be swept. Hardly any men of note were left.

This physician became one of the most faithful and child-like of Christians, and has continued faithful to this hour. He is a venerable-looking man; and in a recent revival, as deacon of the church, he held the vase while eighty were baptized. I have had opportunities of observing the results of the revivals in many places under Mr. Finney's labors, and I think that these are more permanent than those of most revivals.

As for myself, I was profoundly interested in every sermon, supposing that he meant me in every word he said. But when he took the text, "He that is ashamed of Me before men," etc., I was thoroughly bound up in it. In the morning when I called on him, he said, "What is the matter with you?" I replied, that I was rolled up in that sermon. "What! have you been ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ?" Before I left him I think the great decision was made and uttered: "I never will be ashamed of the Lord Jesus again." Of course, I became intensely interested in Mr. Finney; and in many respects, through the grace of God, I owe everything to him. I love him, I venerate him, and hope to meet him hereafter.

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#### REMARKS OF HON. WM. E. DODGE, OF NEW YORK CITY.

I esteem it a very great privilege, dear Christian friends, to be with you to-day, and with you follow the life and the labors of this dear sainted friend. It was my privilege in early life, while living in the State of Connecticut from 1818 to 1826, to be intimately familiar with the labors of Mr.

Nettleton and his fellow-helpers during those years. In 1826 I moved to the city of New York; and in 1828 I married the daughter of Anson G. Phelps. He had been watching with great interest the progress of the revivals in the West under Mr. Finney. Coming from the great revivals of New England, I also took every opportunity to learn what Mr. Finney was doing.

In the year 1830 Mr. Phelps opened a correspondence with Dr. Lansing, of Auburn, and through him, succeeded in inducing Mr. Finney to come to New York. The fact that Mr. Nettleton and Dr. Beecher had spoken against the measures used by Mr. Finney, had led the clergy of New York, as well as in many other places, to look upon his labors with great anxiety and suspicion.

Mr. Finney came to New York in 1830, and with him came Dr. Lansing, of Auburn, and Dr. Beman, of Troy. They all came to Mr. Phelps' house, and there Mr. Finney remained.

(Consequently we all became very intimate with him and also intensely interested, both in him and his lovely, talented wife. She was a devoted wife and mother, an earnest Christian, and, in every sense, his helpmeet).

It was at Mr. Phelps' house that, for a week, these brethren I have named held a succession of prayer-meetings with reference to the work that Mr. Finney was going to commence in New York. The Presbyterian churches in New York were very much under the influence of what was known as the old Calvinistic doctrines, and these new measures were accordingly looked upon by them with very great suspicion. The fact was, that there was not a Presbyterian church, or any other church, that would invite Mr. Finney. Mr. Phelps hired a Presbyterian church which was to let in Vandewater street. In the course of three months it was ascertained that a Universalist church in the neighborhood of Niblo's Garden was for sale, and it was purchased. There Mr.

Finney preached for about fifteen months. It is not necessary for me to go over the plans, and measures, and sermons that were there produced. Mr. Finney was in his glory as he stood in that pulpit, with every nook and corner of that building crowded; and there, night after night, and Sabbath after Sabbath, he preached those wonderful sermons of which we have all heard. Long before the year was up there were many churches that would have been delighted to invite him to come to them.

We had a prayer-meeting that commenced at six o'clock in the morning, and the church was full. I remember going one morning with my grandmother and carrying a lantern. The room was full; and soon the tall, majestic form of Dr. Spring entered. There were a number of prominent men who were brought into the kingdom there—a number of our prominent and leading lawyers.

About that time the old Chatham Street Theatre was for sale, and the Tappans and other friends purchased it and converted it into a church. Mr. Finney stayed there two or three years, till the old Broadway Theatre was bought and converted into the Broadway Tabernacle. It was from that centre that his influence went out over the city, and in many of the churches there were revivals. It was during that time that Mr. Leavitt took down the lectures on revivals that Mr. Finney delivered on Thursday evening; and those will go down to succeeding times as the best lectures on revivals that have ever appeared.

He was the most remarkable preacher that I have ever listened to. He would hold those audiences in Prince street and in the Tabernacle for an hour and a half and two hours, and no one seemed to think that the time hung heavy. His clear and logical mind made everything so plain and convincing, that the most simple and the most refined were alike interested. His style of sermonizing was of the kind adapted to interest. The people of New York had been listen

ing to carefully-prepared essays; and when Mr. Finney came and presented the truth without a manuscript, and in a style and manner plain, direct, and forcible, it attracted the attention of people to an unusual degree. Why, the sermons that he preached in Prince street can never be forgotten by those that listened to them! It seemed at times as though we were brought almost in view of the eternal world! At other times the impressions were so deep that sobs were heard all over the house. I remember that at one time a young man who had been resisting for days, prostrated himself by the side of the stove with agony. Mr. Finney prayed for him in a most wonderful manner; and for more than twenty years he has preached the Gospel in a powerful manner.

And now the great point is, what shall be the influence of this great and good man, now that he has passed away?

I am persuaded that the Lecture to which I have referred, and the Autobiography which is being so extensively read, will do much to diffuse his spirit and perpetuate his influence.

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## LETTERS.

[The following extracts from letters which were read at the Meeting, relate chiefly to the earlier labors of Mr. Finney, and are, therefore, inserted here].

AUBURN, N. Y., *July 19, 1876.*

. . . . I knew brother Finney from June, 1826, and have been with him in his meetings at different times and places, and corresponded with him until just previous to his death. His last letter was dated June 28, 1875, and when his death occurred August 16th following, I felt it like the loss of a father. In my long life I have had many friends to whom I have been much indebted, and felt glad to acknowledge it, but to him more than all others, because of the *truth* and *Christ* that was in him.

As he has alluded to me so distinctly in his "Autobiog-

raphy," you and others will pardon me for saying a word or two respecting it. His first impressions concerning me were more correct than the *judgment* of my friends; he could see spiritually, and feel in his spirit that with all my efforts and desires, that my *faith* was so weak I couldn't strengthen him much in his work of salvation among sinners. Although, like Nicodemus in the presence of his enemies, I could *refer* to the *law*, yet even then my faith was so weak that there was no *living power*.

In his allusions to me after he left Auburn, and the baptism of the Spirit, and especially of my after life, he speaks too favorably, more so than my *life* would warrant. But as to the baptism spoken of, Oh, may I never deny or grieve His Spirit away by covering it up through unbelief! It was about four weeks after brother Finney had left and gone to Troy; our meetings were interesting and crowded; and one evening I couldn't get in my usual place, and pressed into another seat. Doctor Lansing, after opening the meeting, said he wished there might be many prayers, and "that no one would pray for anything but what he wanted, and then stop." I said, in my heart, "I want the Holy Spirit," and dropped directly on my knees and prayed, "Lord Jesus, breathe upon us, that we may receive the Holy Ghost." And it did seem as though *He breathed*, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." I sank down on the floor, and after meeting, two of the brethren helped me home. And ever since that day the *reality* and *necessity* of the Holy Ghost *revealing Christ Jesus* as the Saviour of sinners, and *His word* as having *spirit* and *life* in it, has been more or less abiding with me; but I fail in being such a witness for Christ as that loving-hearted friend and brother would, by his memory and pen, indicate.

I can only say, "By the grace of God I am what I am." And the friends of brother Finney I love, because *their* love is of the *truth* and *for Christ's sake*.

In your gathering July 28th may you have the presence of the Master, and the sweet enjoyment of the communion of saints, is the desire and prayer of

Your Brother in Christ Jesus,

\_\_\_\_\_ RICHARD STEEL.

BENNINGTON, VT., *July 19, 1876*

.... Forty years or so ago, I knew Mr. Finney well in New York. I have heard the great preachers of England and our own country, and at times I think Mr. Finney preached the "glorious Gospel" with more power than any man I ever heard. One sermon I well remember, from the text, "The wages of sin is death;" and another on the Prodigal Son. Although he preached a full Gospel with a burning vehemence awful at times, yet there ran beneath it an undertone of compassion, and then when he met a single soul, he overwhelmed it by Divine love; he allured it, he won it, by God's grace he saved it.

Twenty-five years ago I saw him in England. There, too, he was about his Master's business, doing his best in saving souls.

In Doctor Cheever's church, we got into a sad quarrel, and called in Mr. Finney as a peace-maker. He gathered a company of us into Dr. C.'s parlor to pray with us. One sister who spoke in meetings, he prayed for (by name), that she might have "the grace of silence." He prayed that "Dr. — might know his own mind," and so on. After a while he added, "But Thou knowest, O Lord, that we have had enough of this! Amen."

I once told him that Dr. — wanted him to come and preach revival sermons. "Yes," said Mr. F., "he would ride, if I would row the boat!" He acted so naturally, he could say or do what would have been, or seemed to be, improper in any other man; but his heart was pure and inno-



cent, overflowing with cheerfulness and love for his Divine Saviour and the souls of men. As now I have gotten well into years, I can say with Schiller,—

“Honor the kind one, who with gentler play,  
To lofty duties lured my listening youth.”

Oberlin has heretofore done a glorious work; long may she continue to do it!

Yours, truly,

SETH B. HUNT.

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ALLEGHENY, PA., *June 16, 1876.*

. . . . Shortly after the opening of the Chatham Street Theatre in N. Y. for religious services, it was my privilege (while then a boy) to attend Mr. Finney's ministry. It was in 1833, I think, that Mr. Finney had become much enfeebled in consequence of his continuous and arduous labors. His friends becoming alarmed lest he should become permanently incapacitated for the ministry, an assistant was procured of Mr. F.'s choice, and during a revival of wonderful power, Mr. F. was urged to go on a voyage to the Mediterranean, which he consented finally to do. To leave, under such circumstances, cost him a great sacrifice. He had scarcely reached the Island of Malta, when the spirit of envy and discord crept into the church, the Holy Spirit was grieved, the revival ceased, the church had grievously backsliden, and none inquired the way of life. A few faithful ones besought the Lord in prayer and kept the flock together as best they could. The minister then in charge (a good man) became discouraged, and the condition of the church was alarming. In the midst of this sad state of affairs Mr. F. returned. I shall never forget his expression when he came in and saw but the remnant of a congregation that crowded the church when he left. He turned a withering look upon the minister, and with this question, “Where is

the church I left in your charge?" buried his face in his hands and shed bitter tears. The scene was fearful. It was but a short time, however, before the scattered flock was gathered, the meetings were crowded, the church was revived, and the Holy Spirit blessed his labors in the salvation of souls.

His high regard for the law of God manifested itself when I applied for admission to the church. When I mentioned my residence as in Brooklyn, Mr. Finney said he thought it a violation of the fourth commandment to cross the ferry on the Sabbath. Mr. Tappan, one of the Session, said, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." Mr. Finney replied, "It is not lawful to do evil that good may come." The affair was compromised by admitting me, but advising me to take a letter to a church in Brooklyn, throwing the responsibility where they thought it belonged.

. . . . That Christians might see themselves as in a glass, he once asked this question: "When you take up your religious paper, what do you seek for first of all? Is it the miscellaneous news of the paper, or do you first of all look for the revival news to learn what the Lord is doing to save souls?"

Forty-five years have passed since these incidents occurred, but with many others of like interest, they are as fresh to my mind as if they occurred but yesterday.

Very truly yours,

EDMUND WATTS.

[The following letter from Dea. EDWIN LAMSON, formerly a leading and active member of the Park street church, Boston, was not finished. A hurried draft of the latter part was made on Saturday, which he intended to copy and complete. But on Sunday night, after an illness of only half an

hour, he passed from earth to heaven very much as Mr. Finney went before him. The letter, without his signature, was forwarded to Oberlin by his daughter in season to be read at the memorial meeting.]

BOSTON, *July 21, 1876.*

I am in receipt of a notice of a meeting to be held on the 28th inst., in memory of Mr. Finney. I regret much that I can not see my way clear to be present on an occasion of so much interest. It was my good fortune to be brought into intimate relations with that distinguished man. He and his wife were guests in my family for a number of months, while carrying forward his labors in Boston during the winter of 1856-57.

Our testimony in regard to him is, that he was a man wholly consecrated and devoted to the Master and His work. With him everything was made subservient to this end. He was a living illustration of Phil. i. 21: "For me to live is Christ." In the midst of bodily infirmities which he rarely allowed to hinder him in his work, he realized that his weakness was made strength. When, in the judgment of others, he should have rested, he would brace himself for his work; and few would suspect bodily infirmity, so boldly and earnestly would he enter upon every effort.

He was a fearless champion of the truth. He saw the weak points in other men's faith and was eager to show such their error. While carrying on this work in Boston, the community was much exercised oftentimes by the things which Theodore Parker would say and do. He tried to block the wheels and throw odium upon the work. Mr. Finney made personal calls at Mr. Parker's house, seeking a private interview, but though in the house, Mr. Parker declined receiving him. It was Mr. Finney's conviction that a brief conversation only would reveal the error in his theological theories.

The effect of Theodore Parker's harangues at Music Hall was highly pernicious. Many persons who were frequently at the Park street meetings and apparently near the Kingdom of Heaven, were directly and indirectly influenced by the utterances at Music Hall. It was astonishing to observe what a wide and mischievous influence came from that quarter. In fact, it was so noticeable that the remark was frequently made that many who were almost persuaded to become Christians were intimidated and kept back in consequence. Persons from all the evangelical denominations were so strongly of one mind that it was agreed by them to set apart a day for special prayer that God would either convert Theodore Parker to the truth, or in some way destroy his influence so that sinners would no more stumble by reason of his teachings. It was a day long to be remembered.

Between thirty and forty brethren met in the upper vestry of Park street church, in the rear of the organ. Most of those present took part; all were burdened. While on his knees, one brother is remembered to have said: "I have it! I have it! God hears our prayers." A minister from the Free-will Baptists, impatiently waiting his turn, cries out, "Brethren, let me pray. My heart is bursting;" and so it went on till late in the afternoon. The feeling of assurance was universal and very remarkable. All felt that Divine Providence would surely interpose.

From that hour the scene changed. Mr. Parker asked leave of absence, and in less than a month he left for Europe in search of health, but never returned. He died at Florence.

In a conversation on one occasion we were alluding to the hard features of a campaign in Boston, where is such a mixture of error and truth, where is the aristocracy of wealth and of letters, pride of intellect and pride of social position, and a widespread tendency to ignore man's lost estate and

the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. "Oh," said he, "I knew Boston well." "Why," I asked, "did you enter upon the work now?" He replied, "Because *I* did not want to."

He was not a man who could justify in himself any other spirit than that of supreme love to God and entire consecration to His service. He has been misunderstood when spoken of as stern and severe. Still he would not parley with evil in any form. Let his recent Memoir speak a word for him. Where will another case be found of kinder, gentler dealing with opponents? When he was wrongly judged and opposed, how remarkable his bearing as a disciple of Jesus!

II.

REMINISCENCES

OF

ASSOCIATES AND PUPILS IN OBERLIN.

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MR. FINNEY AS PREACHER AND TEACHER.

[BY REV. LEONARD S. PARKER,\* OF ASHBURNHAM, MASS.]

I FIRST saw and heard Mr. Finney when a young student in the Boston Latin School. He had been invited to preach in that city by Dr. Lyman Beecher and others. I count it one of the choicest privileges of my life at that period, that I heard for months those two grand preachers, so unlike, and yet so great. Mr. Finney's method of sermonizing was so different from anything I had ever heard from the pulpit, that I was exceedingly struck and impressed by it. Later, I was for four years under his influence as a teacher of theology and a preacher. In my early ministry he aided me for several weeks in a powerful revival of religion. Since then, I have met him from time to time, as a pupil meets his teacher, down to the last years of his life. This record is my warrant for what I now have to say.

Mr. Finney's preaching was of a stirring revival character. His discourses were not of the class sometimes praised of late, fifteen minutes in length, hurried through with the speed of the lightning-express train ; but each of them one mighty

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\* Mr. Parker being unable to attend the meeting, by request sent the following communication .

plea as for the life of the souls before him—one majestic unfolding of a vital truth of Scripture.

First of all, his aim was to bring the church into a tender, prayerful, working state. His method of doing this was very searching and thorough. Then he proceeded to address the unrenewed. He preached the law and the Gospel. He reasoned with men. He sought "to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Hence his remarkable success among educated, thinking men. No preacher our country has produced has led back to God so many lawyers, judges, and professional men generally, as Mr. Finney. He once said he had more hope of success with such men than with any other class, if he could gain their attention to the truth.

But there was more than the simple presentation of the themes of the Gospel. He had an intense emotional nature. When he had unfolded his subject in the clearest manner, he would throw himself, body and spirit, into the most impassioned personal appeals, carrying his hearers almost irresistibly with him. We could almost see the yawning abyss, the crucified One, the glories of heaven.

In the inquiry-room, he was peculiarly at home. His manner there was very gentle and winning. He sought to raise no sweeping emotions. He practiced no pious arts. He abhorred "clap-trap" there and everywhere. He would open before those present afresh, in the clearest light possible, the conditions of salvation, removing difficulties, and then press all to an immediate submission to Christ. He had the profoundest faith in God's truth, and in that only, in guiding men to the Saviour. . . .

The years immediately preceding and following the founding of the Institution at Oberlin, form a golden period in the religious history of the Eastern States. And the savor of that season has never departed. The leaven has worked, is working now. The distant, indirect methods of present-

ing the truth, and of Christian work, have given place to a bolder, more personal style of address. We see and feel this in Sabbath-school conventions, and in the meetings and labors of the members of Young Men's Christian Associations. Often at such meetings have I been carried back to the very scenes and methods in Oberlin and elsewhere, under the preaching of Mr. Finney. A few years since, I attended a large Christian convention in one of our inland cities at the East. Among the topics that were most earnestly discussed was that of entire consecration to the Lord Jesus. All the evangelical denominations, all schools in theology were represented; and all the speakers were agreed—not a discordant note was heard. One old gentleman, an early friend of Oberlin, sprang to his feet, exclaiming, "Why, that was the very doctrine Mr. Finney preached in Oberlin years ago! It was thought a hard saying; but now all the brethren speak the same language. I rejoice to see this day." The aged disciple was right. The Christian world had moved. And no small part of the human force concerned in this great, though unconscious, progress, can be traced to the influence of Mr. Finney.

The work in our denomination received a decided impulse from the meeting of the National Council, in Oberlin, in 1871. The delegates from the East went home to report to their respective bodies: "Such a welcome we received! Such a godly assemblage we never met with! And such words of exhortation and prayer from that man of God, Mr. Finney! We shall never forget them."

The early community of Oberlin was one peculiarly fitted to receive the impress of Mr. Finney's labors. The men and women came here to do a Christian work. They were ready to follow a true shepherd. Mr. Finney taught them how to work for Christ. They nobly co-operated with him here; or leaving, as some of them did, they sought to create new Oberlins wherever they went. They were taught to



look for a refreshing from the Spirit of God every year. As new classes of students came in, they were to take them to God in earnest prayer, and to labor to win them to Christ. Thus was inaugurated the series of revivals at Oberlin that have brought thousands into the Christian fold, and which have been followed, much as effect follows cause, by similar refreshings in our best Western Institution.

Passing now to speak of Mr. Finney's influence on the students in theology at that early day, I recall with special interest the fraternal element in it. I say advisedly *fraternal*, rather than *paternal*. No man was more averse than he to any airs of assumption. We could not refrain from smiling at the horror—almost—with which he recoiled from a doctorate of divinity! He was simply a brother among brothers, if an elder one. Coming as I did from the stater ways of New England, it was some time before I could make it seem natural to address him simply as "Brother Finney." Thus by example, as well as precept, he taught us the great truth that we were brethren.

With all this freedom of intercourse, I do not remember any abuse of it on the part of his pupils, any impertinence of speech or manner. There was so much of true dignity in him, that he must be a very boorish or reckless person who could treat him otherwise than with the utmost respect. I was particularly struck with some manifestations of this spirit of gentle, patient fraternity. Among the earlier students in theology were several who had enjoyed few advantages of education. At that revival period, moved as they felt by the Spirit of God, to prepare themselves for preaching the Gospel, they had come to Oberlin as the fittest place for that purpose. Of course, these would sometimes lay themselves open to sharp criticism. Mr. Finney could do this effectively, if it were called for; but I do not recollect one instance in which he allowed himself to do it towards these less-endowed brethren. He uniformly treated them

with kind and tender consideration, carrying the classes with him.

Our instructor in theology inculcated thorough and independent investigation, and invited the utmost freedom in discussion. When I joined the Seminary, the only existing class was that which had studied at Lane, and was now on its last year. Till a new one could be formed, I met with this class. There was a good deal of talent among these students, and their minds had been sharpened by anti-slavery debates. They were not to be put off by mere assertions, or quotations of human authorities. With Luther before the Diet of Worms, they asked for the cogent reasons, and the warrant of Scripture. This spirit was fostered by our teacher, who himself led the way.

Perhaps on no personal quality did Mr. Finney insist more strenuously than that of unselfishness. He could not fail to know the great powers he possessed, the wide influence he had gained, the remarkable fruits of his labors. Yet, through all his teachings and prayers, the spirit of a little child shone; self was left out. In his references to the revivals under his preaching, God was magnified; it was His truth, His Spirit, His glory; coming from the great city, with all its refinements, which he exquisitely appreciated to the small quarters, the hard fare, the rains and mud of early Oberlin, he never alluded to the contrast, or spoke of the sacrifice he had made. He referred, with pain, to the jealousies he had witnessed among ministers, and solemnly charged us never to indulge this spirit. Once he exclaimed: "Why, if any brother can preach better than you can, you should be willing to have him stand on your shoulders and proclaim the Saviour's love to dying sinners!" With great emphasis he taught us to go where the Lord called us, whether the position was high or low, whether the field was attractive or otherwise. The Master's honor and pleasure, the salvation of

souls, we were to have at heart, not money, ease, or any private end.

Fruit came from this planting. It appeared in the West Indian and African missions. In later years I met a veteran Home Missionary agent of Michigan, who frankly said: "I was wholly prejudiced against Oberlin at the first; but when I found the young men trained there willing to go where no others would go, endure hardships without a murmur, live on the smallest salaries, I said 'that institution must be of God,' and I have loved it ever since."

I hardly need say that Mr. Finney enjoined it on us to preach the truth with all boldness, sparing no sin, after the manner of prophets and apostles. We knew his revival labors brought no small reproach upon him. We saw a denser cloud settle around him from his connection with Oberlin. But we never heard a word, or saw an act, that showed the least flinching. The earlier students who went forth from this Seminary had need of this thorough training. Few were the ministers, or lay Christians, who gave them a hearty "God-speed." They had to earn by the hardest the right to be recognized as "true yoke-fellows." But we should have been ashamed of ourselves, we should have done violence to our most sacred feelings and memories, had we bent before the storm, and "sold our birthright for a mess of pottage."

On the religious life of the students, the influence of Mr. Finney was very strong and abiding. Because we were all professors of religion, of some years' standing, and were preparing for the ministry, he did not take it for granted that all was well; that we needed nothing more. He applied to us the same tests as to other disciples. He searched our hearts with the truth of God. He taught us that our first work in every sense was with our own hearts; that we should look for the truest and largest success in the line of entire

consecration to the Redeemer, of living and growing communion with Him. And all his counsels were enforced by the mighty power of his own example. We knew and felt that he practiced what he taught. Especially was this manifest after the precious baptism of the Spirit he received in the early years of his work in Oberlin, whose fruits appeared in all his subsequent teachings and life. With the vigor and power of former years, was mingled a tenderness, a sweetness, that could come only from a wonderful revelation of the Cross by the Holy Spirit. His lectures were not bare skeletons of truth, but had infused into them the force and beauty of real life, were clothed with the creations of a heart that intensely sympathized with Christ. When he presented the subject of the Atonement, for example, so vividly was the great love of the Godhead made to appear to our minds that we found ourselves in tears, at times, with our pencils in our motionless hands! While he peculiarly delighted in clear, fresh, and original thought, he would have us preach to men, as God's truth, nothing which had not been bathed in our own rich and loving experience. We esteemed and honored him as a profound thinker, a most able reasoner, a clear and apt teacher; yet I am sure we all felt that his crowning excellence was his living piety.

One scene in the old chapel no surviving member of my class can have forgotten. The storm of suspicion and detraction—carrying with it so many of his old friends, and converts even—was at its height; and our class were soon to go out and bear its fury. We knelt as usual, Mr. Finney leading in prayer. At first there was nothing uncommon in his manner and words, but soon the great deep of his heart was broken up, and he poured out a mighty stream of supplication—for us, for his former co-laborers, for those whom he had won to Christ, for the ministry, for the Church bought with Jesus' blood, for a lost world. Sometimes he seemed to be leading us, again he seemed to be alone with God.

We thought of Jacob wrestling with the angel at Peniel; of Moses, seeking to be blotted out of God's Book; of Paul, asking to be accursed from Christ, for Israel; of Luther, pleading with God the night before the Great Diet. We remained on our knees a whole hour, then rose and went silently to our rooms. *There* was the secret of the power of this man of God, who communed with the Hearer of prayer almost face to face!

As I write these words of remembrance, hundreds of miles away from the place of my theological training, from the spot where the mortal part of my revered teacher is reposing, awaiting the resurrection of the just, tears will come, unbidden, into my eyes—not so much of grief that his work is done, and that I shall “see his face no more,” as a tribute of nature to uncommon worth. I thank God for all he was to me and to many—and for the hope of a meeting beyond the veil! There has been a reunion there already—there will be a greater one hereafter.

May the mantle of that dear servant of the Lord Jesus rest on the Institution with which so much of his life was identified, on the living ministry, and on the whole Church of Christ!

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#### REMARKS OF REV. GEORGE CLARK, OF OBERLIN.

It is about forty years since I first met Mr. Finney at the house of Dr. Taylor, in New Haven. I was struck at that time with his appearance, and with the manner in which he discussed great theological questions.

The next time I met him was here in Oberlin, where I had the privilege, for a time, of living with him under the same roof, eating with him at the same table, and daily receiving instruction from him in the theological classes.

A theme was assigned to each one, on which, after due preparation, he must discourse, and then “be picked.” It set us all to thinking. The theme that at one time was given

to me was Imputation, a doctrine which was then much discussed; and I well remember how I stood for three days and was questioned. Such scenes were interesting to me, and of the greatest value. Besides my honored parents, there is no person, I believe, to whom I owe so much as to Brother Finney.

He had a psychological mind, and for the power of analysis, I doubt if he had his equal.

I remember sitting once in this house, and listening to him with Seth N. Gates, and at the close of the sermon he turned to me and said, "I never heard such a masterly power of analysis." He was one of the most generous-minded men I ever knew—generous to those that made mistakes, generous to children. My little girl would get hold of his hand and walk clear home with him. My wife went to him at one time and told him that Mr. Spencer, a missionary among the Ojibway Indians, had no overcoat, and he sent him the best overcoat he had, one that had doubtless cost him fifty dollars.

He had no tinge of asceticism about him, not a single particle. He believed that self-denial was a condition of discipleship, but he had no asceticism.

There was never a man that trained himself more like an athlete for his work, in eating, drinking, and sleeping. How many miles I have walked with him in hunting! How often we knelt beneath those tall old oaks in prayer! In all my intercourse with him, I never knew any bitterness of spirit in him.

After he had written against Freemasonry, he showed me letters containing threats of killing him, and said, "I guess I am worth more to kill than for anything else."

Not long before his death, Prof. N—— called at his house on his return from the cemetery. "When I am dead," he said to him, "do not go to the grave-yard to find me. I shall be where I shall be more alive than you are."

REMARKS OF REV. E. B. SHERWOOD, OF ST. JOSEPH, MO.

My acquaintance with Brother Finney began in June, 1835, about the time of the organization of the first theological class in this place. My impressions of him were derived more especially from his power in prayer. I thought him a great preacher, and as a man of superior logical powers; but I was chiefly impressed by him as a man who had power with God, and who had power with men because he had power with God. At the close of the last term of the year 1836, he came into the class-room, and with his great eyes looked over the class, and before he got around, his eyes were swimming with tears. After looking at us in this way a few moments, he said, "Brethren, let us pray;" and he prayed something like this: "O Lord, here is a class of young men who are going forth to preach the everlasting Gospel, and Thou knowest that their words will be like the repetition of parrots, unless Thou shalt fill them with the Holy Ghost." He poured out his soul thus for nearly half an hour, pleading with God that He would not let us go forth in our own strength, until it seemed that the whole place was filled with the presence of God. There was no disposition on the part of any of the class to rise from their knees, and the whole hour was spent in prayer to God. That, brethren, was the most profitable lesson that I ever learned, and the most profitable hour that I ever spent. We came nearer to God, we got a more exalted idea of the work of the ministry; and it was from that scene that I obtained my highest idea of President Finney. All through my acquaintance with him, it was a mystery to me where he got his mighty power. It seemed to be always gushing up, always full. That mystery was solved when I read his "Autobiography." When he was converted he was brought into the full liberty of the Gospel. It was God in him that made him so great a blessing to the world.

## REMARKS OF REV. C. C. FOOTE, OF DETROIT.

I apprehend that we have not a hundredth part of Mr. Finney's wondrous life in his wondrous book. To me it is so blessed, that if I had a thousand dollars I would put it into this book. I have a number of them circulating among my friends; and when they come back, the expression is, "Wonderful! wonderful!"

Mr. Finney was a mighty reformer. I was present in Hartford when he broke the thunderbolt on slavery; and you all know that his voice was as pronounced against that crime of the present age—Freemasonry.

I saw and heard him the first time when he was engaged in that glorious revival in Rochester, which has been already described. I, too, heard that sermon from the text, "The wages of sin is death;" and for two hours it rained hailstones, "every one about the weight of a talent."

When I came to Oberlin, I could not endure his eyes; but when I became acquainted with him, I liked nothing better. I once had what seemed to me the great trial of preaching in his presence; but when he had prayed for me, I could have preached anywhere.

I never saw a man with such wonderful descriptive powers. Many years ago, on a commencement occasion, I was sitting in the big tent beside a woman, now present in the audience, who was holding a babe in her arms. While Mr. Finney was describing the scene in which Solomon showed his wisdom, by commanding the living child to be divided with a sword; so graphic was his portrayal of it, that the woman by whom I sat, clasped her babe to her bosom with a terrified look, and seemed much relieved when she found that her child was not in any real danger.

Mr. Finney was tremendously severe. He has put the lance through me, through and through. But how often have I seen him in the pulpit so overcome with emotion,



that he would turn around and say, "I can not preach. Brother, will you not pray?"

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## REMARKS OF REV. JOSEPH ADAMS.

My acquaintance with Mr. Finney began in the winter of 1849 and 1850. He was laboring as a revivalist in the old Tabernacle, Moorfields, London. This building, capable of holding two or three thousand persons, was built expressly for George Whitefield. Though but a youth, I was associated with an infidel club. I was full of my new notions, and, like my companions, thought we had found the Christian system to be a stupendous sham. While advocating my opinions, and pointing out the apparent contradictions of the Bible to two simple-minded wood-turners, I was invited to go and hear at the Tabernacle a "Professor Finney from America." With the most self-complacent feelings I consented, and went. He sat in the pulpit with a large cloak about him, and appeared to take but little notice of what was passing during the preliminary service conducted by another. When he arose, he threw aside his cloak in a careless manner, and looked around upon the vast audience with an eye which constrained attention. There was something in his manner, arguments, earnestness, and tears (for he wept over sinners) which arrested my attention, and compelled me to think that there must be something in religion after all. I came again, and kept coming till my infidelity vanished, and my soul was pierced through with the arrows of conviction. With a strong arm he held me at Sinai, till its thunders reverberated through my soul, and I cried out, "O wretched man that I am!"

What other man could paint the terrors of the law like him; or who, when the fallow ground was broken up, could drop with gentler hand the precious seed of Christ's forgiving love!

In mighty London it must be something very extraordinary to create even a ripple of excitement; but this man, by the aid of the Spirit, produced a deep and widespread impression. His preaching drew immense crowds. . . . At times his preaching was simply awful. The shot of truth fell like hail. On one occasion when he was preaching from the words, "How can ye believe which receive honor one of another," it seemed as though the people would rise up *en masse* and entreat him to stop, for they could not sit still. The effect was like that which must have been produced on another occasion which he once told me of. By excessive labors in the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, he had so exhausted his strength as to render rest imperatively necessary. For that purpose he went to some quiet village in the country. But like his Master, he "could not be hid." Soon after his arrival the pastor of a small church urged him to preach. He positively declined; but on learning, a little time after, that the pastor was paid a very small salary, and half of that was raised by a Ladies' Sewing Society, while there were men in the church abundantly able to pay the whole without feeling it, he said, "My indignation was stirred, and weak as I was, I felt I must preach. I did so, and took for my text, 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' Towards the close of the sermon I applied my remarks to the officers of that church, and told them what I had heard, and I lashed them as with a whip of scorpions. While laying on the whip, the Senior Deacon rose up, and with tears streaming down his face, cried out, 'Mr. Finney! Mr. Finney! please don't say more. I'll pay the whole of it!'"

Similar was the effect of his preaching in London. The scene which is described in his Autobiography (pp. 405-6-7), I was eye-witness to. Thousands were converted as the result of his labors.

✓ In 1852 I came to this country to pursue a course of study, and was welcomed to his home in Oberlin. His home to me

was a paradise. His childlike simplicity, freedom from all ostentation and assumption, were to me a marvel. I shall never forget the impression made on my mind, when shortly after my arrival in Oberlin I was returning from recitation and saw Mr. Finney and Prof. Morgan sitting on the sidewalk with their limbs hanging in the ditch, engaged in such earnest conversation as to be oblivious to their position. Those who had been accustomed to Western life might not have noticed it, but I had been taught to look upon clergymen as a superior race of dignified beings, and to see two such men acting so like school-boys was more than I could understand.

Mr. Finney's faith and power in prayer were a prominent characteristic. At the family altar he seemed to know instinctively the wants of every member of the family. In a few concise, comprehensive phrases the petition was laid before the Throne and the answer came right away.

A remarkable instance of answer to his prayer occurred in the summer of 1853. It will, doubtless, be remembered by some that hot, dry weather had prevailed for a long period, till the pastures were scorched and the hay-crop seemed likely to be a total failure. Every one seemed to feel that if this drouth continued a few days more, the cattle must die, and the harvest perish. On Sunday morning we had gathered in this church, as usual. Not one of that large company appeared to anticipate rain that day, for scarce a cloud was to be seen. The burden of Mr. Finney's prayer that morning was for rain, and though twenty-three years have passed since then, that prayer is as fresh in my memory as if I had only heard it yesterday. He told the Lord our position, and among other things said: "We do not presume to dictate to Thee what is best for us, yet Thou dost invite us to come to Thee as children to a father, and tell Thee all our wants. *We want rain!* Our pastures are dry. The cattle are lowing, and wandering about in search of water.

Even the little squirrels in the woods are suffering for want of it. Unless Thou givest us rain our cattle must die, for we shall have no hay for them in winter; and our harvest will come to nought. *O Lord, send us rain! and send it now!* Although to us there is no sign of it, it is an easy thing for Thee to do. *Send it now, Lord, for Christ's sake!* Every heart said "Amen."

The service proceeded, but by the time he got half through his sermon the rain came down in such torrents that we could scarcely hear him preach. He stopped and said, "We'll praise God for this rain," and gave out the hymn,—

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love, and praise."

We sang; at least all hearts did, but many could not for weeping.

Only one other such scene do I remember in Oberlin, and that, I think, occurred the same year on a Sunday afternoon, when, after preaching, he invited all who were willing to consecrate themselves to Jesus to occupy the pews in the body of the church. They were soon cleared, and the choir, under the leadership of Prof. Allen, sang "Come to Jesus." It was a second Pentecost. From all parts of the house, but especially the gallery, the young people poured in till scarce a seat was left unoccupied. The manifested presence and glory of God were almost greater than I could bear. Oh, for a repetition of such scenes!

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REMARKS OF PROF. JOHN MORGAN, D.D., OF OBERLIN.

I have been so closely associated with Mr. Finney for many years, that my mind is fraught with recollections of him; yet I can not tell in detail the things that have interested me in a way that would interest others as they have

myself. I did not know him personally when he was engaged in the great western revivals; but some of my intimate friends were with him, and I used to hear a great deal about those revivals. I remember that I was shocked with the rapidity with which converts were admitted to the churches, and I wrote to a friend asking him if many were not deceived. He replied—No; that Mr. Finney preached with such intelligence and power that those who were converted knew that they were Christians. He did not mean that none were deceived, but that the large majority were genuine converts. This was said particularly of the work in Utica, where it was very powerful.

I first heard him preach in the Brick church, when Dr. Spring was absent. Not long after that, he began his preaching in Vandewater street. I think Anson G. Phelps was his chief supporter. I was profoundly interested in his preaching, and regarded it as far superior to that of any other preacher in the city. The high intellectual cast of his preaching particularly struck me; and as I became better acquainted with him, I was more struck with the fact that his mind was of a high order.

I think that those who were most intimately acquainted with Mr. Finney have come to the conclusion that he was a man who combined, in a remarkable degree, the intuitive and the logical powers. He had a wonderful intuitive power, and when he had arrived at his bold premises by intuition, whether taken from reason and the works of God, or from the Word of God, he would reason from them with wonderful power. I came, therefore, to the conclusion that although Mr. Finney was not a learned man, he had been such a student, such a thinker, had so profoundly reflected, that he was really one of the deepest theologians that I had any knowledge of; and I have been compelled to compare him with President Edwards, as at least his equal; and President Edwards is confessedly one of the first theologians that our

country has ever produced. In fifty years, if it be not now, I think that Mr. Finney's equality with him will be admitted.

I have therefore regarded him as admirably adapted to be an instructor in theology, though his mind went with such a rush, that perhaps at times he failed in patience with the young men. He was careful that his pupils should not accept his teachings without seeing for themselves that it was the truth. Sometimes the young men would swarm around him like bees, discussing some point with him; and then he would take up the subject and think it over anew, and would prepare a series of lectures remarkable for clearness and grasp of thought. Sometimes I have been astonished at the richness and depth which would characterize these lectures.

But I think that all of us felt that his spiritual power was that in which he most excelled. The influence which he exerted on souls was sometimes very strong. I remember times when he thought religion was declining in Oberlin, for his standard was so high that he wanted to have things at a very high pitch in order to satisfy him at all. I remember how he used to come and talk the matter over with us, and I used to quake as his mighty eye would fix itself upon me. I believe that he had very much the same kind of influence over whole congregations; but I felt it especially when he addressed me personally. There was in him, in prayer, the most remarkable power that I have ever seen in any human being. A distinguished friend once said to me as he rose up from his knees after Mr. Finney had led in prayer, "It seems to me that I have never prayed." Indeed, I used to feel that his praying was far more powerful than his preaching. When he became old he could not maintain the tenor of thought with that mighty energy with which he could when he was younger; but his praying was always mighty. There was never any lack of straightforward power. I used to re-

gard it as the greatest feast, when I came to church, to hear him pray. I do not think that, in his earlier years, he had this power in prayer in the same degree as he had later on in life. In the latter part of his life, I thought his praying was better than his preaching—I mean better intellectually.

I have often heard people talk about the sternness of Mr. Finney. I know that when he preached to sinners and to backsliders he was stern. But while he was thus stern, I do not believe we had a man among us who had more tender sensibilities. I have observed him in his family circle, and I do not believe there could be found anywhere a lovelier man; and it was very natural that all around him should love him very tenderly. I remember when his children were little ones how they loved their father.

It was remarkable that in whatever house he entered he had a fascinating power over the little ones. They would come to him, and he could take them in his arms, and they would feel at home there. And so it was when he performed the rite of infant baptism. He could take almost any child that was brought. The child seemed to be charmed into confidence with him. And then when he prayed, and put the water of consecration on the little one's brow, he did it in a way that I do not believe was ever equaled. This was in consequence of the outflow of his soul toward the little ones. And so it was also at funerals. He used to enter so tenderly and beautifully into the sympathies of the family, winding his fine mind into all their interests.

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REMARKS OF REV. HENRY COWLES, D.D., OF OBERLIN.

I find myself at a loss what to select from the many things which I might say of Mr. Finney. I would mention the many-sidedness of his character. This has been particularly

developed in his relations to me within the last thirteen or fourteen years.

I feel his loss more than any words can express. I have been in the habit occasionally, when I found anything which especially interested me, of reading it to him, partly to obtain suggestions.

I can not tell you how I have been affected at times when I have seen him weep naturally and readily. I recollect one case which will throw light upon the tenderness of his spirit. What I was reading brought to light the great love of God toward men. He burst into tears and said, "And yet, all He can do He can not persuade sinners that He loves them!"

One of the things which has impressed me very much with regard to his character, passed his lips half an hour, perhaps, before his death, as given me by his wife. He said to her, "You know, my dear, I have been inquiring a long time what the Lord would have me do. I have seemed to be waiting, waiting, waiting." His wife replied to him, that his active service was long since past, and that this waiting was doubtless the Lord's will concerning him. To which he ultimately replied: "*Well, I have not apostatized, have I?*" It was his modest, perhaps half-playful, way of putting it. He doubtless meant what the great apostle expressed, "I have kept the faith."

I might say a great deal with regard to my earlier acquaintance with him. Many of you know that I have reported his sermons, more than a hundred of them, which I read to him.

One of the first sermons I heard him preach impressed me with its wonderful power upon the conscience, and from that time onward I had the same impression continually renewed. He had the power of setting truth before the mind so that it should *stick*. He had a wonderful power in the conclusion of his sermons of gathering up points adapted to make



strong, vivid impressions. The history of such men impresses me often with the resources of God to make great men. And one lesson we may learn is, one of confidence, that God will raise up other great men. None of us need fear that God's resources are short as compared with emergencies that will arise.

III.  
CRITICAL ESTIMATES  
OF  
MR. FINNEY'S CHARACTER AND WORK.

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THE COMMUNICABLE SECRETS OF MR. FINNEY'S POWER.

[BY ARTHUR TAPPAN PIERSON.]

[NOTE.—The following is a substantial reproduction of an address at the Memorial Meeting, which was not written until since its delivery.—A. T. P.]

As we study the life of any man of mark, we see some traits which stand out boldly, like mountains in a landscape, and give individuality, idiosyncrasy—sometimes idiosyncraziness. They distinguish the man from all others, and remind us of the famous couplet of Byron's :

“Nature formed but one such man,  
And broke the die, in moulding Sheridan.”

If these traits were all, biography could serve us but little; in our proneness to shirk heroic effort, we should say of such men, ‘they are inimitable,’ and rest content with our low level of life.

No doubt, some secrets of Mr. Finney's success are incommunicable, such as his insight into human nature, his powers of analysis and argument, physical and nervous energy, vivid imagination, rapidity of thought and speech, and athletic vigor in antagonism. But are we to stand afar off, and view his devotion to God and to souls, with an awe that dismisses all thought of imitation or emulation? If so, that life has

left its print upon the living leaves of history, largely in vain. Upon Life's Field of the Cloth of Gold, God has flung a knightly gauntlet, challenging us all to a true Christian chivalry! Mr. Finney shows us, on a grand scale; what one life may be and do; and were he here, he would say, with Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

In speaking of the communicable secrets of his power, we begin and end with the ultimate source of all power, namely, *Character*. As a man, Mr. Finney was specially marked by *Candor*, *Courage*, *Conscientiousness*, and *Consecration*.

*Candor* is no common virtue. Few men are honest with themselves; they evade and avoid convictions which would compel them to condemn their past course and reform their present practices. He was habitually honest with himself, with God, and with men. His was a candid mind that rejoices in the truth, even when it rebukes, and that must deal honestly, whether in searching self, praying to God, or speaking to men. His frankness surprised and sometimes offended; but a second sober thought led men to feel that he who told them the plain truth was the man to go to, when they sought salvation or sanctification.

His *Courage* was not of that physical type which is often only the consciousness and confidence of brute-force; but it was moral intrepidity. It made him bold to face and fight wrong doctrine or bad practice; decisive and incisive in dealing with souls; regardless of conventional restraints; daring in his blows at popular idols; brave in the use of any means which he believed right and effective. Such courage came from that conscious fellowship with God, which made Luther bold as a lion before the Diet of Worms, gave Knox his motto, "One with God is a majority," and led Paul to say, "If God be for us, who can be against us!"

His *Conscientiousness* was seen in instant and constant obedience to every conviction of duty, whether it came

through his moral sense, the Written Word, or the living spirit. To know the right was to pursue it; to perceive the truth was to receive it; to see God's will was to submit to it, in serving or in suffering. He proved that "God hath given" the Holy Ghost "to them that obey Him" (Acts v. 32); for, while others passively waited for the Spirit to imbue and endue them, he learned that each new act of obedience brought a new baptism.

His *Consecration* was the laying of himself as a whole offering on God's altar. Emptying himself of selfish ambition, he held up the emptied vessel to be filled with the grace of God. And the "tabernacle" which he thus "sanctified to God's glory," God "sanctified by His glory." Mr. Finney found many disciples, who, like those whom Paul found at Ephesus, had not received, or so much as heard of, the Holy Ghost, since they believed; who had got as far as John's baptism of repentance, but not as far as Jesus' baptism of spiritual life and power. He taught the Church to go on from the grace of *salvation* to that of *sanctification*, and still on to that of *service*, that each believer might be "a vessel, sanctified and made meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work."

Thus far, Mr. Finney's example is not certainly beyond the reach of imitation. But may we attain unto his *great Faith*? How did that faith come to be so great? Was it conferred outright, as a gift of God, or was it cultivated? We answer, that faith fed and grew upon the *Word of God*. He searched his Bible on his knees, and grouped its promises, till unbelief fell, smitten, before the combined blaze of their testimony. It grew, again, by the experience of *prayer*. Experiment is the most convincing argument. God bids the doubting soul, "Enter into thy closet;" there "handle me and see!" there "prove me, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing till *there be none left to pour out.*" Faith is confirmed by every new promise

which the prayerful soul grasps, and especially by every new experience of prayer answered.

Was Mr. Finney's power *as a preacher*, in any measure communicable? Here again we note four imitable qualities; he was *simple, sincere, scriptural, spiritual*.

His *simplicity* was seen in his *singleness of aim*, his sacred zeal to glorify God in saving and sanctifying souls. He cared more for the groan of one whom the arrow of truth had wounded, than for the shouts of an hundred praising the archer's skill. To reach and touch that which is deepest and most abiding in man was what he sought; not to play on transient sensibilities and emotions, but to mould lasting convictions, affections, resolutions. Hence he avoided dogmatism, substituted argument for authority, assumed nothing, and led the mind on, step by step, to the embrace of truth. Then he struck for the *Will*. While the iron was at white heat, he brought down the hammer to give it shape; with awful emphasis on personal responsibility and the obligation at once to *choose life*, he insisted on instant, decisive, visible action!

His singleness of aim begat *simplicity of matter and manner*. His words did not hide his thought; his illustrations did not call attention to themselves, for they were windows to let in light, and the elaborate frame-work and stained glass which adorn the window, make the light dim. He dared not interpose his greatness between dying souls and the cross, and desired to be nothing but the finger, pointing, and the voice saying: "Behold the Lamb of God!"

His obvious *sincerity* impressed his hearers with the conviction that he believed and knew what he said. He bade his pupils preach only what was bathed in their own rich, personal experience. "Sensational" sermons were, to him, awful trifling, poulticing the deadly cancer which is eating at the vitals and calls, at once, for the knife! This intense sincerity lent authority and majesty to his searching exposures

of deceptive experiences and false hopes, such as rest upon the Ritualism which has the form, without the power, of godliness, or upon the Pharisaism which lacks the spirit and motive of a holy morality, or upon the dead past which is contradicted by the living present. It fitted him to rebuke the dishonesty toward God, which appears even in self-examination and in prayer, asking for what we neither expect nor *will* to receive, and in habitual disregard of the voice of conscience and of the Spirit.

His preaching was *Scriptural*. The Bible was his constant and devout study, with the arrangement and adaptation of its truths to human souls. It was the armory where he found weapons, defensive and offensive, and took unto him the panoply of God; the treasure, when, as a householder, he brought forth things new and old.

He preached the *whole* Gospel. The *Law*, with its stern demand and perfect standard, he used as a plough to sweep away refuges of lies and tear up false hopes by the roots; then he followed it with the *love* of God, as the sower gently drops into the furrow the seed steeped in his tears. The sword of the Spirit is two-edged. Warning, or invitation, alone, like a scimitar, may strike effective blows in one direction; but when the two keen edges meet in the point, they prepare us for the thrust that pierces to the joints and marrow. Thus Mr. Finney begat deep conviction of sin. As Socrates sought to lead men "from ignorance unconscious to ignorance conscious," he aimed to produce that consciousness of guilt and peril without which there can be no deep sense of need or of obligation.

How *spiritual*, too, was the tone of his preaching! With what ardor and fervor he besought men to be justified and sanctified by faith. With what burning, glowing zeal, did he assail the sectarianism which cares for sect more than for Christ; the conventionalism whose "awful respectability" hampers ministers and churches by a false fastidiousness,

and dares not break through the bonds of custom, and adopt a new measure, even to save a soul! With what scathing rebuke he exposes the idle neglect that leaves generations to die without the Gospel, though *for each disciple to win one soul each year to Christ, would be to convert the world within the lifetime of a single generation!*

His preaching was spiritual in *power* as well as *tone*. He depended on the Spirit, whose blessed unction alone fits us to plead with men, or even to understand the Gospel. With the agony of Jacob at Jabbok, he sought the power to witness. "Honor the Holy Spirit and He will honor you," was his maxim; and he taught that without the habitual recognition of dependence on the Spirit, revivals neither begin nor continue.

If any one secret of Mr. Finney's power be emphatic, it is this: he gave his *whole soul to God*.

There is a Scottish legend for whose historic verity we do not vouch, that when Bruce, the Deliverer of Scotland, died, Douglas carried his heart, embalmed, into his battles with Edward IV.; and that in the heat of the fight, he would fling the heart toward the enemy's lines and shout: "Forth, heart of Bruce, and Douglas will follow or die!" Charles G. Finney flung his own heart forward to the feet of God—over and across this world, with its hollow treasures and shallow pleasures, into the spiritual and eternal! Then he followed his heart, till, as a redeemed and perfected saint, he reached the goal where his affections had long been lodged!

Give yourself, with such sublime simplicity of aim, to God and His service; empty yourself as completely of worldly and selfish ambition; seek as devoutly to be filled and moved by the Spirit; and God will be as willing to use you as a chosen vessel for His glory!

## PRESIDENT FINNEY'S THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM AND ITS GENERAL INFLUENCE.

[BY REV. GEORGE F. WRIGHT.]

Others speak to us to-day of President Finney, as in some measure filling the role of a Whitefield, a St. Bernard, and a Gamaliel. The subject of our thoughts on this occasion was distinguished as a preacher of the Gospel, as a man of remarkable spiritual attainments, and as the founder of a school; for, whatever share others may have had in laying the foundations of this institution, they would probably all of them readily yield the precedence to the distinguished revivalist who so early cast his lot in with this enterprise, and for more than a generation became its best known representative abroad, and its spiritual inspiration at home.

It is expected of me to speak of President Finney in the role of an Augustine, elaborating a theological system, and through it reaching onward with a direct grasp to the generations of the future.

With, of course, many qualities that are in contrast, these characters certainly have numerous striking points of resemblance. Their early neglect of religion, the pronounced nature of their conversion, and the overwhelming flood of emotion that accompanied it, the philosophical cast of their minds, and, what is more in point, the mental furniture with which they began and carried on their expositions of the Christian system of thought, give a striking likeness to these remarkable men. Augustine knew no Hebrew, and very little Greek. Yet, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, "no single uninspired name has ever exercised such power over the Christian Church, and no one mind ever made such an impression upon Christian thought." (Ency. Britan. on Principal Tulloch.)

President Finney frankly acknowledged, that while he had studied Hebrew and Greek to some extent, he nevertheless did not consider himself competent to venture on any inde-



pendent criticism of the Scriptures in their original languages. Our English version was to him what the Vulgate was to Augustine.

With regard to the future influence of President Finney's system of Theology, authorities differ. There are those who say of it, that it is already as dead as the Pharaoh whose host was drowned in the Red Sea. The present gathering is sufficient refutation of this idea. It does not, however, become us to be too sanguine in our assertions or our expectations, but calmly to consider the truth, and to bestow only that meed of honor which is actually due. In speaking of a system of thought, it is best not to presume upon the sympathy of the audience addressed, especially when they are admirers of the author of that system. We ought not to say anything here for which we would not willingly be called to account before his sympathetic auditors. Truth is truth irrespective of the source from which it comes. The personality of the author fades from the view of even his survivors; but of truth it is well said, "The eternal years of God are hers."

President Finney's system of Theology may be described as a growth rather than a creation. He did not set himself to work in early life to write a symmetric treatise of Divinity. It has not the pointless mediocrity of such a production.

But his system is the outgrowth of a profound religious and extensive practical experience, coupled with an unusual aptitude for philosophical speculation and logical discrimination. He has interpreted Scripture not after the delusive and belittling method of the mere linguist, who is so buried in the details of the grammar and the lexicon that he can never see the broad current of general doctrine that underlies and comprehends it all. He is not like many of modern commentators, prevented from seeing the forest by reason of the multitude of trees.

President Finney approaches the Bible, as every one must

do, with a certain amount of presupposition regarding the nature of the subject to which it is addressed. In his view, as in that of Augustine, the Bible is a religious revelation to the common people, which does not to any great degree lose its perspicuity in a translation. Its main revelation is so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. It is a practical revelation of a highway of holiness, which is not a substitute for common sense, but a supplement to it. Regarding the points in dispute among evangelical Christians, the characteristics of his system are briefly these :

1. The human will is self-determining in its action.
2. Obligation is limited by ability.
3. All virtuous choice terminates upon the good of beings, and, in the ultimate analysis, on the good of being in general.
4. The will is never divided in its action, but with whatever momentum it has at each instant, it is either wholly virtuous or wholly sinful.

With regard to total depravity, he accepts it as a biblical doctrine, that all the acts of men since the fall, and previous to regeneration, are sinful.

Regeneration and conversion are treated as synonymous terms, descriptive of a coetaneous act both of the Holy Spirit and of the human will. He is content to accept the facts and let alone the mystery; insisting, however, that the human reason is always so far respected, that the truth is in all cases the instrument through which conversion is secured by the Spirit.

The condition into which men are brought by regeneration is either that of continued holiness, increasing in volume, or of states alternating from entire holiness to entire sinfulness; the former state finally predominating, and ending, according to the ordinary Calvinistic doctrine of perseverance, in everlasting salvation. The final perseverance of the saints is

accepted as a revealed truth, which the reason can not contradict, and whose mysteries are left with the Lord.

Likewise, the doctrine of election is maintained as being, in the wisdom of God, our only assurance that the salvation of any will be secured. There is a *plan* of salvation whose means and ends were chosen from eternity, and which is now unfolding before us.

In this plan Christ is the central figure; a being who is both God and man, and whose humiliation and sufferings are a governmental substitute for the punishment of those who are sanctified through faith in His name. The Atonement satisfies the demands of general justice, and its provisions are freely offered to all men. Almost all the statements we have here given would be accepted by what are called New School Calvinists.

The exceptions would relate to the nature of virtue so far as concerns the ground of obligation, the simplicity of moral action, and the process of sanctification.

So far, however, as relates to the nature of holiness, President Finney's system is the first cousin, if not the grandson of that of President Edwards the elder. The Oberlin student finds himself very much at home in Dr. Samuel Hopkins' "Inquiry into the Nature of True Holiness," which is scarcely more than a development of the Edwardian theory of virtue.

To avoid the charge sometimes made against this theory, that it substitutes abstract for concrete objects of love, or, as Dr. Hodge states it, puts "the universe in the place of God, as that to which our allegiance is due," President Finney was very particular to use a formula in which God was expressed. In designating the objects of love, he was over-careful to say, "God and the universe." At the same time he emphasized as much as President Edwards the thought that "all other beings, even the whole universe, is as nothing in comparison of the Divine Being." The charge

of Dr. Hodge, as made against President Finney, is one of the grossest literary blunders that was ever committed. For it was made against a two hundred-fold repetition, designed to guard against that very misconception. We trust that in the new edition of President Finney's works which is contemplated, his editors will not curtail those repetitions.

The view of benevolence of which President Finney was so noteworthy as a defender, and so powerful as a preacher, is adopted in an unparalleled degree for the maintenance of just views, both of the goodness and the severity of God. By regarding "benevolence" as "good willing," as the generic virtue under which all minor virtues range themselves as species, we are raised to a point of view from which the reason can not indeed and of itself *prove* the evangelical doctrines of Christianity, but from which it can most easily *approve* them.

De Quincey has well remarked that Christianity is the only religious system that provides any place for preaching, in the true sense of that word. Dr. Albert Barnes has narrowed the field to still closer limits, and has shown us that all great preachers have gone for their most effective weapons to the armory now in possession of the New School Calvinists. It is an old saying, that Calvinists preach Arminianism, and that Arminians pray Calvinism, and so in one way or the other the whole truth of both is preserved by congregations of either stamp; and, therefore, neither of these bodies of Christians has been abandoned to the uncovenanted mercies of God.

President Finney has, we believe, succeeded better than any other author with whose writings we are acquainted, in elaborating a system of Theology which combines and harmonizes the truth of these contending parties. He has done this in part in a negative way, by not philosophizing overmuch. Contrary to an industriously propagated impression, we affirm that it is not the New School Calvinists who are

spoiling the Evangelical system by an excess of philosophy. The charge, rather, pertains to the so-called Old School theologians, who burden the system with their inflexible theories of "an imputed guilt, which is not actual guilt;" with an idea of obligation which is dissevered from ability. It is the Old School theologians who enter into the philosophy of regeneration, and attempt to prove a universal negative regarding it, asserting that it is an act of the Spirit which is not moral and persuasive. They undertake to prove that in regeneration the Spirit produces a change "in those immanent dispositions, principles, tastes, or habits, which underlie all conscious exercises."

In President Finney's theory of virtue, especially in his statement of the simplicity of moral action, he is sometimes accused of rationalism, while in his doctrine of sanctification he is liable to the charge of mysticism. His theory that each act of the will is wholly right or altogether wrong, gives him this advantage, that he can interpret in an absolute manner the command to "Love God with all our heart." At the same time the ground of hope that we shall attain actual stability and constancy in holy exercises of the heart, is open for discussion on independent principles.

The questions concerning the assurance we may have of a state of entire, *i.e.*, continuous, sanctification in this life, and, if attainable, the methods by which it may be obtained, fall into the same category with those concerning perseverance of the saints, and security in our heavenly estate. The maxim upon this point, deducible from this theory of simplicity in the action of the will, is, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." His exhortation with regard to sanctification is really nothing more than this: Give perfect obedience now to the will of God; fill your minds to their utmost present capacity with the persuasive knowledge of Christ; open your hearts in the fullest manner to the present work of the Holy Spirit. This may keep you for the future,

but our duty is always with the present. The large space in his systematic theology which President Finney has devoted to the offices of Christ in securing our sanctification, will always remain classic passages upon that subject, and wherever they are known, will be valued most highly by the most devout in the Christian Church. No one is more ready than he to exalt Christ and crown Him Lord of all. If it be rationalism to use words in such a manner that they are self-consistent, and to propound a philosophy which neither does violence to the reason nor robs Christ of His glory, the charge need not be feared. And on the other hand, with regard to mysticism, it is essential to emphasize thus the pre-eminence of Christ, for there is no magical power in the formulas of President Finney's system either to determine practical duty for us, or to determine us to duty. The good of being, considered as a general conception which we are to choose, is so diffused, so vast, and so far off, that the choice of it does not of itself aid us much in threading our way through the practical questions of casuistry. The navigator needs a chart of the ocean as well as a look at the North star, to guide his course through the shoals and into the harbor. After we have chosen the highest well-being of God and the universe, we shall have to fall back on all the old-time helps of laws, customs, traditions, tendencies of mind and revelation, in order to determine what things to do and what to leave undone.

The Edwardian theory of virtue is in no sense a substitute for the Gospel. It is only an unfolding of the words of Christ when He said that all the Law and the Prophets hung on the two commandments, to "Love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves." Under this divinely enunciated law, the Gospel ranges itself as the clearest of all revelations of subordinate duties, and the most persuasive of all incentives to virtuous action, and the most perfect vindication of the justice and mercy of our God.

President Finney's example is invaluable in this, that he leaves no excuses for sin; that he presses home upon all present responsibility; that he exalts the Atonement of Christ, and magnifies the Holy Spirit. His system must be judged as a whole. The student who stays one year at Oberlin, and goes two years somewhere else, will be in danger of getting just enough of it to misunderstand it. We understand no theory of virtue till we have adjusted it in a complete system of theology. Of the many advantages of the comprehensive theory of virtue we are here discussing, it is not the least that it affords a ready solution to the increasingly difficult problems of final causes which scientific discussions are forcing upon us. It is becoming more and more hazardous in us to say for what ends particular contrivances in nature were designed. The scheme of nature grows upon us in its vastness and comprehensiveness. We can no longer refrain from giving to final causes a unity that is as far off and made up of as many particulars, as the last, end in virtuous choice.

With God, to choose is to perform. He chooses the good of being, and everything in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, is designed for the promotion of that end. We can not fathom any of His ways, but halt along with such provisional interpretation as serves the practical ends of our existence. For knowledge, both of personal duties and of God's subordinate designs, we have to pray for daily bread, and we go forth six days in the week to gather the manna that comes down from heaven.

The end for which anything is created is the sum of all the uses to which it is ever put. This principle, which in its sphere is coincident with President Finney's definition of virtue, is destined yet, I have no doubt, to play an important part in adjusting natural theology to scientific theories of nature. An Oberlin student will have less trouble with such theories than any one else. In stating correctly the true

theory of virtue, one has put himself in the way of reconciling every problem of recent scientific investigation as it stands related to the doctrine of design in nature.

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### SERMON BY PRESIDENT FAIRCHILD.

PRESIDENT FINNEY—THE PREACHER, THE TEACHER, AND THE MAN.

“Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.”—JOHN VI. 12.

If the abundant and satisfactory presentation of “Memorial Day” had been anticipated by my brethren of the Faculty, they would scarcely have felt that anything farther was required; and indeed the task which they have assigned me is like that of gathering up the fragments after the feast; but for such a service we have the authority of the Master.

Next to the being and the work of God Himself, the most interesting object of contemplation is human character and human life. What we commonly call nature has its charms, and natural science becomes to many an attractive and absorbing study. A microscopic plant or animal presents a field of inquiry and research to which an enthusiast may devote his life. It is to him full of interest in itself, and as an expression of the thought of God. But the humblest human life with its experiences, its purposes and achievements, is intrinsically more important than the whole range of nature, as the gem is more important than its setting; and contemplated as a work of God, an exhibition of His truth and faithfulness and gentleness, the material creation, the heavens above and the earth beneath, become of small moment in the comparison. And when such a life, wrought into great movements involving the interests of men and of the kingdom of God in the world, comes to a close, we may well turn aside to consider the lessons it has brought us.

Especially is it fit that at Oberlin, with the closing of the work of the College year, we should pause and take note of



a grand career of service and of fidelity which since the year began has for this world reached its end. If Charles G. Finney had not lived, and labored, Oberlin could not have existed. Other servants of God, just as faithful, are rightly reckoned the founders of this school and of this community; but when we look farther, we must consider them as the outgrowth of a great religious movement in the land, the embodiment of certain controlling ideas of Christian labor and Christian culture. These ideas and impulses wrought through John J. Shipherd and his associates in the laying of the foundations at Oberlin; but if we trace back the impulse to its earthly source, we shall be led to the thought and the heart of Mr. Finney. This educational enterprise was the fruit, not very remote, of his work. After the foundations were laid at Oberlin, Mr. Finney came in with his personal presence and accumulated power, and impressed his thought and life upon the community and the school as few men could have done. It has been thought proper, on the first anniversary after Mr. Finney's death, to devote this hour to the contemplation of his life and work as shown in the *preacher*, the *teacher*, and the *man*.

Mr. Finney commenced his special work as a preacher in the character of an evangelist. His thought and aim were to rouse the churches to a higher life, and more effective activity, and to secure at once the conversion of multitudes to Christ. To this form of labor he had a call scarcely less distinct than that of an apostle. Whatever may be thought in general of the work of an evangelist among the churches, for a permanent arrangement, no one can reasonably question that this career was appointed to him by divine authority. The inward conviction and impulse and the outward signs all led in this direction. An experience in his conversion only a little less marked than that of Paul, an intensity of nature and of activity as if the truth of God were "a burning fire shut up in his bones," a yearning compassion

for souls in darkness and sin, and a zeal for God that burned upon him without consuming, a power to pierce the most thoughtless heart with conviction by a word or a look, were the signs of this divine call.

Another fact may well be considered in explanation of the independent attitude he assumed, and the work he was called to do. Mr. Finney was taken from the world, and not from the Church. He was brought up with very slight association with religious institutions or churchly influences. With a nature strongly impressible to religious truth, and drawn to its contemplation as by a kind of fascination, he had still stood apart from the church, in the attitude of a critic upon her doctrines and her life. He had no such association with religious people as led him to look to them for counsel, or to seek their guidance in the determination of his work. His natural independence of character doubtless led in the same direction; but if he had been brought up within the fold instead of without, with a life-long respect for the ministry and the ordinances of the Church, it is quite credible that another form of labor would have attracted him. The training he had received in his pursuit of the law, co-operated to the same result. He was not hampered by any associations from instruction in catechisms, or any forms of sound words with which the Church indoctrinates her children, and which in general are doubtless wholesome in their action. He came to the study of the Bible and the doctrines of the Gospel with the same freedom of judgment and of rational instinct with which he had apprehended and embraced the principles of law, and looked for a similar self-evident truthfulness. Thus he turned away at once from the old school dogmas of sin in the nature, of obligation beyond ability, of the literal transfer of the sinner's guilt and punishment to Christ, and of regeneration by a change of nature. These, so far as he knew, were at the time the prevalent doctrines of the Church. He found them,

*the old school dogmas of sin in the nature, of obligation beyond ability, of the literal transfer of the sinner's guilt and punishment to Christ, and of regeneration by a change of nature.*

as he believed, in the Westminster Confession; and in discarding them, he naturally felt that he was departing from the traditions of the Church, and taking a position in a measure antagonistic to that held by the ministry in general. The outspoken boldness of his preaching, in these directions, led, on the other hand, to apprehensions and suspicions, on the part of many, as to his soundness in the faith; and thus all the influences conspired to confirm him in this somewhat independent line of labor. The strong conviction, beginning with his conversion, and abiding with him to the end, that he must look to divine rather than human guidance, naturally disposed him to mark out a path for himself; and thus, probably unconsciously at first, he entered upon the career of a reformer in the Church. The mission to which he felt himself appointed was that of saving men; and he rejected the old forms of doctrine because they were a hindrance and not a help in his work. He needed doctrines which he could preach, and which would move the consciences of men. In submitting himself to God, he had consciously yielded to the truth, and he came to depend upon the truth as the power of God unto salvation. Thus he was led to readjust and restate for his own uses as a preacher of salvation, the great doctrines of grace. He was naturally a keen analyst in the range of philosophic thought, and few men have had an intenser relish for such studies, on the ground of their own intrinsic interest; but it was not as a philosopher that he pushed his inquiries, but as a servant of Christ to whom a dispensation of the Gospel had been committed. On his knees before his open Bible, sustained by the sympathy and prayers of one good elder, he wrought out his theological system—not that he might become a reformer in theology, but that he might qualify himself as “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Other men in the churches were at the same time working for similar modifications of the old Cal-

vinism—men like Taylor and Beecher in New England, and Beman and Aiken and others in New York; but with these men Mr. Finney had at this time no communication. He had no opportunity to confer with “flesh and blood,” but received his Gospel as the word of God communicated to his mind by the illumination of the Spirit. Thus he went forth to his work as a preacher, with the full conviction that he had a message from God for men; and this conviction was strong upon him during the fifty years of his public life and labor.

This persuasion ruled in his soul and shaped his thought and his work. Probably no sermon of his ever made the impression that he had wrought upon it as a work of art, although the spirit of his work was that of the truest art. His aim was to bring the truth home to men in such forms as to control their thoughts and move their hearts and decide their action. To this end the truth itself was put foremost; and form and embellishment were made wholly subordinate. His own clear apprehension of the truth enabled him to give his doctrine such a statement that it would be accepted as self-evidently true. Thus he taught as one having authority, who had a right to require assent to his message; and few men ever commanded a wider assent to their doctrines.

The manner of his discourse was simple, direct, conversational rather at the opening. Beginning with the simplest propositions, defining carefully the idea he was to present, telling first what it was not, and then what it was, he advanced to the profounder views of his discourse, and thus gradually paved the way to a powerful appeal to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. In the days of his full strength his principal discourse upon the Sabbath seldom fell short of an hour and a half in length, and often extended to two hours; and to the end of his days he rarely preached less than an hour. The modern demand for short sermons

found no sympathy with him. Perhaps this view sometimes prevailed in his audience. It seemed at times that the first half-hour devoted to laying the foundation might profitably have been saved, by assuming that his hearers in general apprehended and accepted the elementary truths with which he introduced his discourse. But it was probably true that he could not give us the last without the first. By these simple steps he gradually rose to the heights of his theme, and it was very rare that the view from those heights did not compensate for the patient climbing. As the great truths kindled upon his imagination and his heart, the whole intensity of his nature was aroused, and he poured out upon his audience a fervid torrent of argument, expostulation, and entreaty. The general impression of his sermons was that of intense solemnity, and earnestness, and yearning love. However stern, and awful even, the presentation of the truth might be, no one ever could mistake the compassionate love that often choked the utterance and bathed the face with tears. If at times he seemed to take his place with God, and stand almost as the herald of His indignation against sin and the sinner, he never failed to illustrate the Divine compassion which would rescue the sinner from his ruin.

He had rare power in touching the consciences of men. However plausible and comely, or concealed a worldly character might be, under his steady hand the adornments and disguises fell away, and sin, and all forgetfulness, and neglect of God appeared in their intrinsic hideousness. To him sin in its own nature was mean and vile, however amiable or graceful the form it might take; and respectable sinners as well as others felt his searching appeals.

But with all his solemnity and intensity of earnestness, his discourses were often relieved with bursts of humor which diffused themselves over the assembly in a rippling smile. Such a response seemed never to disturb him, nor to detract

from the solemn impression. The next response would be breathless silence and tears.

✓ While Mr. Finney's views of truth were in general remarkably clear and definite to his own thought, it was impossible that with so fervid and intense a nature, his statements should not often be rhetorical instead of literal and exact. The thought which he was urging seemed often to fill his vision, and you would almost think it was the only truth he apprehended. Indeed, it is probable that for the time the truth seemed to him just as he presented it. He did not consciously overstate it, or to his own thought indulge in hyperbole. But one who had not been carried on by the tide of his thought and feeling would find it necessary now and then to limit the statement by some related and modifying truth. If he were preaching on self-denial, and urging the duty of counting all things but loss for Christ and His cause, he might seem to one not familiar with his opinions and his style of discourse, to inculcate ascetic views—a renunciation of the pleasures and enjoyments of life as mischievous or wrong in themselves. If he were urging Christian economy, the duty of consecrating every faculty and possession to the service of the Master, as opposed to a self-indulgent use of God's gifts, the uninformed hearer would understand him to discard all beauty, all adornment and art, and to inculcate a bald and narrow utilitarianism. ✓ Once when exhorting the young men of his classes to a true missionary zeal, a readiness to go forth to any field without anxiety as to needed supplies, he told them that a young man was not fit for a missionary who could not take an ear of corn in his pocket and start for the Rocky Mountains; and this was forty years ago, when only here and there a hardy traveler had penetrated that distant region. Doubtless somewhat of his power as a preacher lay in such intense conceptions and expressions of the truth; but it sometimes led to misapprehension of his views; and it was not safe for a hearer to assume that he

understood them until he had viewed them with the preacher from different sides. He aimed at a definite and strong impression, and that view of truth seized upon his mind and heart which was adapted to make this impression. It would have weakened the impression to attempt to define the exact limitations of the truth, and give it in harmony with other truths. It was safe to assume that the hearer would apply all needed limitations. But there was an apparent unconsciousness on the part of the preacher, that he was not presenting the truth in its exact proportions. Probably most effective preachers partake of this characteristic. The fact does not prove that a partial truth is more effective than the truth, but there are limitations in the human understanding and the human heart; and a sharp point will often penetrate when a broader stroke would be resisted.

Mr. Finney's renown as a preacher was attained during his ten years of preaching as a revivalist, before he entered upon the work at Oberlin. Although religious intelligence was very slowly diffused, and all means of communication were limited as compared with the present; yet his name and his fame were known throughout the land, and his supposed views on controverted doctrines were warmly discussed even in the rural districts and on the Western frontier. Those who received his views were often called *Finneyites*. His noted sermon on the text, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" foreshadowed somewhat the divisions which followed his preaching.

Coming to Oberlin, he took up the work of teaching, but he never ceased to be a preacher. He became pastor of the church at Oberlin, and preached ordinarily one sermon on the Sabbath, and often a weekly lecture, for more than thirty-five years. His style of preaching was gradually changed in connection with his new work and field. It became less rhetorical and more didactic—the natural result of his work in the lecture-room. The entire congregation, or rather the

entire people—for there was but a single congregation in the place during the first twenty years—became his theological class, and were thoroughly drilled in the great truths, and doctrines, and duties which filled his mind and heart. Under these circumstances the habit grew upon him of presenting the theme of his discourse with multitudinous and minute divisions and sub-divisions—a habit which has often been made the occasion of criticism. The logical relation of these divisions was not always carefully maintained, but it was generally clear that he had a definite aim in every new statement, even if it seemed in words little more than a restatement. A fellow-student at my side, when once we were engaged in the class-room in criticising sermons with our instructor in homiletics, and an allusion had been made to Mr. Finney's tendency to "split heads," instantly replied, "Yes, but when Mr. Finney splits a head, an armed Minerva generally leaps out."

But this didactic and lecturing method rarely characterized his entire discourse. When he had cleared his way by these formal statements of the truth, he applied it to the living, needy souls before him with the full force of his earnest and yearning soul. He did not cease to be a revival preacher in the quiet life at Oberlin. Every term and every month brought new students that needed to be converted, and the spiritual progress of his flock was to him a matter of constant and absorbing interest. He might justly address his people as Paul did the Galatians: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." His familiarity with the people in the Sabbath services, was like that of a father in the midst of his family. If, in the application of his discourse, it became convenient to call by name a member of the congregation, it struck no one as an impropriety. No one could question his motive or his kindness of heart. So in the prayer before the sermon, he would bring before the Lord, in the style of familiar reverent con-



versation, the wants of the people in a manner so minute and particular, that each one felt that he was personally presented, and the utterance of a name sometimes removed any lingering doubt. These morning prayers were a feature of the church services at Oberlin for many years. They were conformed to no standard or model. They embraced not merely confession, thanksgiving, and supplication, according to the approved ideal of a prayer, but seemed to be free and confidential communication of pastor and people with the Lord, in which opinions, and experiences, and hopes and fears were mingled with the supplications. One who heard for the first time, might be startled at the familiarity of tone—might at first even be shocked at the apparent irreverence; but listening farther, he would see it was the language of confiding love—the reverence of a soul who had “seen the King in His beauty.”

It was not a rare thing with him throughout his pastorate, as in his previous labors as an evangelist, after an earnest presentation of the truth, to call upon the people to make their decision, and pledge themselves to the Lord upon the question of duty submitted. When the people had listened to an earnest appeal on the text, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,” they were not dismissed to ponder the question at home, but were brought at once to the test, and asked to stand up before the Lord and pledge their fidelity to Him. From a weaker man such a call would have seemed an impertinence; but from him it seemed scarcely less appropriate than from Joshua or Elijah.

In coming to Oberlin, Mr. Finney did not intend to lay aside his work as an evangelist. He retained his place as a preacher in the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City, where he proposed to spend each winter in revival labors; and when this arrangement was terminated, it was his custom for twenty-five years to devote the winter to evangelistic labors, chiefly in the cities; and twice during this period he

crossed the ocean, and spent a year and a half on each occasion, in most abundant and successful labors in England and Scotland. Calls for such labors were constantly urged upon him, and sometimes his health or the demands of the home-work would lead him to hesitate. But as the winter came on, his spirit was stirred within him, and like a veteran warrior he hastened to the conflict. The twofold idea of the glory of God and the salvation of men, seemed to blend into one mighty impulse to press him into the field. He had no more doubt of his call to preach than any prophet ever had of his own mission, and the outward results fully justified this inward conviction.

It was somewhat remarkable that such a man, after such a career of ten years, beginning at Evans' Mills as a missionary in the new country, and ending in the Broadway Tabernacle, the center of potent influences gathered to bear upon the city, should have accepted the idea of settling down to the quiet work of teaching in a new school in the wilderness of Ohio. But to him it was not a change of his general plan, but merely a change of his base of operations. He began to feel indications of declining strength, and he was led to look about him for the agencies which were to carry forward the work which he had begun. Some of his friends, too, had begun to feel the importance of having his theological views and his ideas of Christian work impressed upon a class of young men who were about to enter the ministry. This class, providentially prepared, having dropped out of Lane Seminary, was waiting at Cincinnati for an instructor; and at the same time a place had been provided in the wilderness of northern Ohio, where teacher and pupils could be received, and the foundation laid of a theological school. So far as any human plan was involved, these three conditions were independent of each other, but under Divine ordering they were brought together, and thus began Mr. Finney's work as an instructor; and thus, with

the aid of other co-laborers, grew up the theological school at Oberlin, and thus the whole Oberlin enterprise was reinforced and sustained. But for this accession its field would have been very limited, and even its continued existence most uncertain. The interests which had been accumulating about Mr. Finney during the preceding years, were transferred in great measure to Oberlin, and friends and foes alike began to look to this new center for something good or something bad, according to their views of Mr. Finney, and both classes saw what they expected to see.

Here he commenced his work as a teacher of theology, and prosecuted it until his death—a period of forty years. His qualifications for the work were an acute, analytical mind, naturally inclined to philosophical thought, especially in its bearing upon theology, a power of clear discrimination and appreciation of differences of thought and expression, entire freedom from the trammels of traditional doctrine, with a conservative leaning to the historical faith of the Church, a disposition to adhere to the Old unless the New approved itself to him as more in harmony with Scripture and with reason. Thus he was no destructionist, with a passion to pull down rather than to build up—no negationist, satisfied with a denial of the old faith. He was a positive, and earnest, and intense believer. The truth as it is in Jesus was his life and his hope, and in his view the life and hope of the world; and all schemes for the good of mankind he judged by their relation to the Gospel system. But in doctrine nothing but the truth, as he saw it, could satisfy him. Hence in his classes he was always a learner with his pupils. His method of instruction was to draw out his pupils in inquiry and discussion, and thus establish in them the power and the habit of independent thought. All his own views, as well as those of his pupils, were subjected to this ordeal; and it was no rare thing for him to readjust his doctrinal statement to meet the new light which he thus obtained. It

was vain to bring against his better view some former argument or statement of his own. He would smilingly reply to any such suggestion, "Well, I don't agree with Finney on that point." It was his aim to be right rather than consistent. But his interest in philosophical truth was always subordinate to his great aim of bringing human souls to God, and thus his great anxiety in reference to his pupils always was that the Gospel should possess their hearts and shape their lives. No member of his class was in doubt that this was the burden of his soul. In certain portions of his yearly course he took special pains to give his instruction a practical turn, so that every pupil should be brought up to a higher Christian experience. Sometimes in his opening prayer with his class, he would be specially exercised in his anxiety for their spiritual enlargement; and there are those who remember instances in which the outpouring of his soul consumed the entire hour, and they will never forget those seasons in which he seemed to bear them up with himself to the very presence-chamber of the Most High.

His manner in the class was animated, cheerful, and not seldom mirthful. A burst of laughter from the class never disturbed him, and no laughter was more hearty than his own. At one time on account of feeble health he gathered his class to his own house, where they enjoyed the easy-chairs and sofas of his parlor. One member of the class betrayed a tendency to drowsiness in these very comfortable conditions, and as he always dismissed his class with a prayer, he prayed that all his pupils might be interested in their study and kept from sleeping. The next day as they gathered to the same room, they were a little disconcerted to find that the easy-chairs were all removed, and their places occupied by straight-backed chairs from the kitchen. Mr. Finney entered with a sly twinkle in his eye, and said, "Brethren, the Lord has shown me how to answer my own prayer."

Such pleasantry was of frequent recurrence, and constituted one of the charms of his instruction.

His system of doctrine, when he came to Oberlin, was the New School Calvinism, in its essential features the theology of such men as Lyman Beecher and N. W. Taylor—what has come to be recognized as the advanced New England Theology. At this time he was recognized as orthodox, according to the New School standards, as is shown by the fact that after his appointment at Oberlin he was invited to the chair of "Pastoral Theology and Sacred Eloquence" in Western Reserve College at Hudson, with the intimation that if he preferred the chair of "Didactic Theology," his preference might be considered.

This Theology he inculcated in his classes, and with a few modifications, or improvements, as Mr. Finney regarded them, it became the Oberlin Theology as it has sometimes been called. ✓

The feature of his teaching which excited distrust, and which alienated from him many of his old friends, was the doctrine of Sanctification. A careful study of his teaching on this subject would have allayed anxiety, even if it did not produce assent; but the times were unpropitious. The suspicion of heresy was aroused in the land, and New School men were in haste to purge themselves from the suspicion. They had enough to bear without taking upon themselves any new burdens. Thus, so far as the Congregational and Presbyterian churches of the land were concerned, the responsibility of discussing and adjusting the doctrine of Sanctification fell chiefly upon Mr. Finney and his associates at Oberlin. Whether any progress was made in the undertaking, remains perhaps to be determined. Those years of thought and labor and prayer, with the hallowed experiences which attended, must yield some result to mankind. ✓ One of these results may and will be a clearer apprehension of

Gospel truth, upon the great questions of Christian character and experience.

✓ Another point elaborated by Mr. Finney in his work as an instructor, belongs rather to ethical philosophy than to practical religion—It is the problem of the nature of virtue, or as he preferred to call it, the foundation of moral obligation. The idea of reducing all virtue to benevolence, and of making the well-being of the universe, with God at its head, the grand reason or ground of all obligation, was not original with Mr. Finney. That is, others had presented this view before him. Yet he doubtless worked it out for himself. President Edwards the elder, and his friend Samuel Hopkins, of Newport, had presented this view, and had given it a footing in the New England Theology; but it had not obtained a general acceptance. The more prevalent theory was that of an abstract right or eternal fitness, in the light of which the rightness or wrongness of all actions is determined; and of this theory President Mahan, of Oberlin, was a strenuous and able advocate. In connection with prolonged and earnest discussion, in the class-room and in gatherings of the entire community, Mr. Finney wrought out his own system, making benevolence the whole of virtue, and the well-being of the sentient universe the final, absolute good in the presence of which all obligation arises. This system he elaborated in all its details, and published in its final form in the English edition of his "Systematic Theology." This treatise on the nature and foundation of obligation has not received the recognition which it merits. Its author, at the time of its publication, and many years afterward, was under the ban of suspected or doubtful orthodoxy; and his words commanded only limited attention. Then again the volume was too formidable in its dimensions and general aspect to attract any but the most determined readers. But it will be difficult to find, in the range of philosophical literature, a more thorough and exhaustive discus-

sion of such a theme. In masterly grasp of the subject, clearness of insight, and sharpness of discrimination, and in the conclusiveness of its logic, it will not suffer in comparison with the great efforts of President Edwards; and as a discussion of the great problem in ethics, it covers ground, and makes discriminations, and establishes points far in advance of Edwards' "Treatise on the Nature of Virtue," which deservedly ranks so high.

The utilitarian philosophers of the modern English school would find in this treatise a clearer statement of whatever truth they hold, and a demonstration of the errors into which they have fallen. A pupil, a disciple, who has found in this profound and luminous teaching the inspiration of his life, may be expected to speak thus of the master. But men who were not his pupils, and who were trained in different theological views, have borne similar testimony. Dr. Redford, a prominent theologian of Worcester, England, wrote a preface to the English edition of Mr. Finney's theology, in which we find these words: "As a contribution to theological science, in an age when vague speculation and philosophical theories are bewildering many among all denominations of Christians, this work will be considered by all competent judges to be both valuable and seasonable. Upon several important and difficult subjects the author has thrown a clear and valuable light, which will guide many a student through perplexities and difficulties which he had long sought unsuccessfully to explain. The editor [*i. e.*, Dr. Redford himself] frankly confesses that when a student, he would gladly have bartered half the books in his library, to have gained a single perusal of these lectures; and he can not refrain from expressing the belief that no young student of theology will ever regret the purchase or perusal of Mr. Finney's lectures."

It can not be maintained that the literary arrangement and execution of his theological writings were equal to their

strength and power of thought, nor that the same thoroughness and clearness of conception always characterized the movement of his mind. Like other men, he had his bewilderments, and it seems probable that a more systematic training in early life would have given a higher value and wider acceptance to his written thought. But in view of all the facts it may be questioned whether any public preacher or teacher, during the last fifty years, has made a profounder impression upon the religious thought of the age.

But back of the preacher and the teacher, was the personal character—the man; and Mr. Finney was quite as impressive in what he was as in what he did. He was gifted with large and generous powers, and in any walk in life must have been a man of mark. Those elements, so difficult to define, which make up what we call personal power, were found in him in the largest measure; yet it can not be doubted that the field of religious thought and action gave the widest scope to his peculiar genius. No proper account of his character and his work can be given without a recognition of the grace of God which was upon him, in the gift of the Holy Ghost. This was his own view of the secret of his power. But the Spirit of God finds a limit in the nature with which He deals; and the powers and faculties of the man who receives Him are the measure of His manifestation. A child possessed of the Holy Spirit is still a child. The Divine gift adorns the weakness, but does not transform it into strength. In the preacher and teacher divinely furnished, there was still a strength of nature which was the basis of his power.

In person he was tall and commanding, and every movement was naturally easy and graceful. His stately form manifestly did not appear on its own account. The body was fully possessed and permeated by the soul, controlled and vitalized in every part by the spirit within. There was a power in his eye which none failed to feel who came within



its range—a searching, penetrating power, changing at times in expression from a sternness that was almost awful, to a melting tenderness and gentleness. But the power did not seem to lie in the physical organ, but in the soul that looked through it—the intense and fervent spirit that vitalized the whole outer man.

Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the inner man was the depth and intensity of his emotional nature. This gave energy and power to every movement and every expression; every thought radiated both heat and light, and the two were to him inseparable. To see and to feel a truth were to him one and the same thing; and his hearers were, to a great extent, impressed in the same way. His range of feeling was as broad and varied as his thought. He was not only stern and solemn as a prophet, from his sympathy with God and with all righteousness and holiness, but in turn as gentle and affectionate as a child, attracting children to himself as if he were one of them. In his own family and with his friends, his manner was characterized and tempered by a genial playfulness which set aside constraint, and made all feel at home in his presence. No one was more ready with a sportive allusion or remark, and sometimes a serious admonition was conveyed under such a cover. Not long before his death a stranger called to see him, who professed what are called liberal views, and expressed his interest in Mr. Finney's teachings and his general approval of them. "But," said he, "there is one point in which I don't agree with you; I don't believe in a personal devil." "You don't!" said Mr. Finney; "don't believe in a personal devil! Well, you resist him awhile, and you will believe in him."

The intensity of his own religious affections and experiences, of course colored and modified his public instructions. For himself he never seemed to over-estimate such experiences, or to accept in himself or in others any senti-

mental or emotional glow, in place of genuine obedience and righteousness; but Christian experience to him involved the profoundest and loftiest emotions. He seemed at times to have been caught up to the third heaven with Paul, and to have shared in its unutterable joys. Under such an inspiration his representation of the religious emotions would transcend all ordinary experience, and the result would often be discouraging and depressing to those who walked in more quiet paths. Some of the most saintly souls, possibly even in his own home-circle, seemed to suffer at times from the reaction of his almost seraphic flights; not that he was himself unable to appreciate the lowly experience of a mere child, or would willingly disparage the feeblest effort of faith; but those who could not soar with him were sometimes left behind in discouragement, and might have welcomed the guidance of a more quiet and restful hand. Yet there were times when he seemed to walk in the valley rather than on the mountain-top, and the weakest and most self-distrustful could keep step and step with him.

A misconception of Mr. Finney has prevailed to a considerable extent, that his range of thought and of interest was very narrow—that he was so absorbed in the contemplation of direct Gospel-truth, and its immediate application to the wants of men, that the wider field of human interests and human life was not embraced by his sympathies. A limited acquaintance with him through his preaching or his writings, might sometimes give rise to such an impression. Those who have read only his articles on recreations and amusements, as published a few years since, have naturally fallen into this misconception. His life-long habit of presenting only that side or view of truth which at the time seemed to meet his purpose, has tended to confirm the idea. But it is an entire misapprehension of the man. The whole range of human interests, embracing science and art, and civil and social life, had attractions for him, and he was an

advocate and promoter of the widest culture. His delight in music in all its proper forms was intense, and the musical interest at Oberlin from the earliest days has grown up under his approval and encouragement. But he gave little place to what was artistic simply, and realized no end in the elevation of heart and life. The immense choir and the swelling organ gave him no satisfaction unless they distinctly articulated the praises of Jehovah; and once, after a failure in this direction, he stepped forward for the morning prayer, and said, "O Lord, we trust thou hast understood the song we have tried to sing; thou knowest that we could not understand a word of it."

Such was the breadth of his nature and of his sympathies that although his early education was comparatively limited and narrow, he did not fail to appreciate the advantages of the broadest culture; hence his influence upon the work of the College in this direction was entirely wholesome. The teachers in every department had his sympathy and support, and he never under-valued any branch of learning because he had not shared its advantages.

The great leading lines of human thought and action were familiar to him, and men who were looked up to as leaders in these various directions, were often impressed with the clearness of his views and the wisdom of his suggestions in the direction of their own specialty. Once when summoned before the Court of Common Pleas as a witness, in a case where as pastor he had received a confidential communication, he took his stand upon the privileges of a pastor, and set forth the principles of the case, in such a way as to command the assent and admiration of the court and of the entire bar.

When such a man as Senator Chase had thrilled the people with his words and thoughts of wisdom and inspiration on the question of the hour, Mr. Finney could follow him

with words and thoughts of equal weight and wisdom—a peer among the leaders of the people.

Yet Mr. Finney must be regarded rather as a leader of thought than a leader of men. He rejoiced to find himself before the multitude; but it was that he might set the truth before them, and bring each one personally to God. The organized movements of men, in Church or State, had little attraction for him; and in such gatherings he was seen only on rare occasions. He had no ambition to be recognized as a leader, and the idea of standing as the head of a new sect or denomination was repugnant to him. There were times in his life when with a different temper he might have been betrayed into this mistake. He had the independence and self-reliance of a leader, but his mission from God was to the individual human soul—not to masses or organizations. He was certain of his own work, and he could recognize that others had theirs, but he could not turn aside to co-operate with them. Thus from the beginning to the end of his public life, he pursued his own work in his own way.

In this work, as to its power and method, he can have no successor, any more than Elijah or Paul. The man and the work were made for each other, and no one can take up what he laid down. Others have entered into his labors and will gather the harvest of his sowing; but no one can ever stand in his place, or wield the power with which he was endowed. But others can share in the same singleness of purpose and consecration of life, and can, each in his own way, work for the same great end; and those who have witnessed such a life and felt its power, live henceforth under a higher obligation.

The outcome of that work can never be estimated except by Him to whom the secrets of all hearts and the issues of all lives are known. Redeemed souls, a numerous throng, already stand upon the crystal sea within the circle of God's

Glory, whose faces were turned heavenward by this herald of the everlasting Gospel; and the power of his life shall still work in the world even among those who have never heard his name, until time shall be no more.

In setting forth the power of such a life, we only magnify the grace of Christ, who calls His servants and prepares them for their work, and sends them forth with the promise, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

*My young friends of the graduating classes:* With the life and work of our departed teacher and father, you have had less direct acquaintance than most who have preceded you in the college life at Oberlin. His venerable form, still erect and stately under the weight of four-score years, has been familiar to you, and from time to time his voice has fallen upon your ears like the echo of a trumpet call. And how much his thought and prayer and faithful endeavor have had to do in shaping your thought and life, none but God can know. Some of the rills of truth from which you have refreshed your souls along your way, have flowed from the great Fountain of Truth through channels which he opened. Some of the impulses to a life of duty and of service which have inspired your hearts, have come directly or indirectly from his fervent and faithful soul. The doors of usefulness which you may enter in the years which lie before you, have in many cases been opened to you by his personal influence and effort; and thus to the end of your earthly life, and on into the life beyond, your character, your work, and your destiny will be, in a measure, shaped by what he was and what he did.

And here is our relief and satisfaction in the closing up of such a career of usefulness and power. There is to be no real loss. From that burning and shining light, in which for so long a season we were permitted to rejoice, a thousand other lights have been kindled, and thus the darkness of the world shall be more and more enlightened.

It is impossible to fall within the range of such a life, without coming under higher obligations to God and to mankind. You and we all who have felt the power must accept the responsibility. The higher ideal of consecration and of service which that life has given you, you can not lay aside. You will none of you be called to do the work he did; but in the same spirit of consecration and fidelity, you will be called to do your own work. No public career even, may open to you all, but love to God and to mankind can inspire your hearts, and fidelity to all truth and righteousness can give power and efficiency to your lives.

Be not disheartened if sometimes that fidelity shall lead to misapprehension, and shall bring you reproach instead of honor with men. With God there is no misapprehension; and in the end He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment shall be as the noon-day. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality," He gives "eternal life." God grant that this may be your purpose and this your portion. Amen.

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